Solar for All DC - Innovation and Expansion Grants
DOEE Responses to RFA Questions

Q1: I am in the process of building a sculpture studio for my small DCRA Licensed business. The studio will be in the back of my residential property. I am permitted by zoning to have a small business on site. Would I be eligible to apply for this grant for my small business electric needs? The roof slopes directly south. Please let me know.

A1: Please refer to the Eligibility criteria specified in Section 1.6 of the Notice of Funding Availability and Request for Applications located here: https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/release_content/attachments/Request%20for%20Applications_13_1.pdf. Criteria 2, 4 and 5, in particular, provide guidance regarding this issue. This grant opportunity is not intended to be a rebate program for individual households or businesses to install solar systems.

Q2: Are developers from outside the DC area eligible to apply? We are a solar developer based outside the District, but most of our work is in the District, and we would like to submit an application. My confusion stems from pages 17 and 18 of the RFA, which state that a DCRA Certificate of Good Standing and Tax Exemption Affirmation Letter are required documents, which I interpreted to mean that only DC non-profits and businesses can apply. However, I am hoping that those documents are only required if either of those situations apply to the applicant, and that we are in fact eligible to apply.

A2: Developers from outside the District are eligible to apply. If they are already doing business in the District, they should have determined whether they were required to file with the DCRA Superintendent of Corporations, and whether taxes, fees or reports were required.

In order to apply for consideration, an applicant must be "current on all obligations outstanding to the District" and provide a certificate of good standing to prove it (RFA 3.4; RFA App. 2 - PCA sec. II.D (p 3).

In order to receive a grant from the District, grantees must be registered to do business in the District. Please click here for more information on how a foreign filing entity may do business in the District (https://dcra.dc.gov/service/corporate-registration-foreign-filing-entity).

The Tax Exemption Affirmation Letter is applicable only if the entity is a non-profit. The confirmation of non-profit status is required regardless of the jurisdiction of origin, and should be reflected in the documentation required for the registration of foreign filing entities.

Q3: How is the kWh (or financial equivalent) transferred to low income residents?

A3: Respondents are encouraged to provide well-justified proposals that provide innovative yet viable approaches for allocating energy or other financial benefits to low income residents. (Please see Section 7.2 Project Description, Core Barriers 4.)

Q4: What rate ($/kWh) should we use to calculate the financial equivalent when completing our financial models?

A4: Determining the cost per kWh assumed in a financial model is at the discretion of the respondent. Because electricity rates, financing structures, and other factors are highly variable and project-specific, proposals should include all relevant assumptions used to calculate project costs and benefits.

Q5: How are low income recipients selected to receive the kWh (or financial equivalent)? If we have affordable housing in our portfolio, can we prioritize these tenants in our application or does the city determine who receives the benefit?

A5: Determining methods and approaching for selecting project beneficiaries is at the discretion of the respondent, and should be clearly detailed in the grant proposal. Tenants receiving benefits must meet the criterion of 80% Area Median Income (AMI) as identified in section 1.2 Purpose of the Grants.

Q6: Would a project on a multi-unit (~25 units) low-income housing building owned and run by a non-profit qualify for the Solar for All grants?

I do see that single family low-income housing (4 units or less) is specified, but wasn't sure if this might fall under "Owner-Occupied non-profit."

A6: Based on the limited information presented, the project described above qualifies for the Solar for All grants as it relates specifically to the types of buildings that are eligible under the grants (see Section 1.2, paragraph 2 of each RFA). Sections 1.6 and 1.7 of the RFAs provide additional guidance regarding eligibility. Please also note the following, as stated in Section 1.6 of the RFAs:

"DOEE intends to separate the competition for the funding according to building type. In the event of an applicant's reasonable mistake in interpreting the scope of one of these RFAs, DOEE retains the discretion to reclassify a proposal, or part of it, to the other."

The applicant should therefore determine the category for which an application will be submitted, based on the specific characteristics of the project.

Q7: My elderly Mom lives in D.C., has a small-ish solar system on her house. The system was designed for expansion. Will the new grant pay to expand existing PV systems installed in single-family residences? My Mom has been retired for some time now and is living on a fixed income, though she's likely not considered "low-income".

A7: Please refer to the Eligibility criteria specified in Section 1.6 of the Notice of Funding Availability and Request for Applications located here: https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/release_content/attachments/Request%20for%20Applications_13_1.pdf . Criteria 2, 4 and 5, in particular, provide guidance regarding this issue. This grant opportunity is not intended to be a rebate program for individual households or businesses to install solar systems.

Q8: Our response to the RFA will identify specific community solar host sites. Does DOEE prefer/require that we also identify an engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) partner within the application, or can a competitive selection (e.g., RFP) process for an EPC be listed in the RFA response as part of project execution?

A8: DOEE does not require that an EPC partner is identified in the application, but identifying an EPC partner would be very helpful. Describing the applicant's selection process and its efficacy would be acceptable. At a minimum, the grant applicant must describe in detail, with supporting facts and documents that are available, how the applicant will execute the design, procurement, and construction of the proposed project.

Q9: For parking lot canopy projects, does DOEE consider stormwater management costs to be within the scope of allowable project development costs?

A9: Stormwater management costs are not an allowable cost under this RFA, unless they are directly associated with, and integral to the installation of a PV system, i.e. serving as ballast and/or module racking, and a law, or an order of a court or agency, requires that the work be done anyway. For example, DOEE's stormwater management regulations, found at 21 DCMR Part 500, require certain properties to meet a stormwater retention requirement.

Q10: Must an applicant provide the following documents for <u>all</u> partners identified in the grant application, or do these documentation requirements pertain only to the lead applicant?
- IRS W-9 Tax Form
- Tax Exemption Affirmation Letter

A10: These documents are required for the lead applicant only.

Q11: If the grant recipient was a private enterprise developing a community solar project, its off-takers were small businesses electricity customers within the District, would it be acceptable for the host site to be a government agency owned facility?

A11: For this grant, the proposed project must provide either (a) 100% of electricity generated from the system to low-income residents or (b) provide the financial equivalent of the 100% of electricity generated from the system. Therefore, if 100% of the electricity were to be directed to small business customers, the project applicant would have to determine and demonstrate the way in which the financial equivalent of the 100% electricity generated from the system will be provided to low-income residents. The host site can be owned by a government agency.

Q12: Please let me know if the low income homeowner can apply for this solar grant directly or did he have to apply for it through some organization.

A12: A low income homeowner may apply directly, but note that an application must propose to build a system that provides at least 25 kW in capacity. DOEE will not consider projects that propose to build a smaller system, unless those projects address Core Barrier #2 (Competition for Roof Space). This grant opportunity is not intended to be a rebate program for individual households or businesses to install solar systems.

Q13: For a single family DC resident what is the income cap? I would like to apply for grant money to install solar panels on our row home on Capitol Hill, but cannot find who is eligible for the low income grant.

A13: Please refer to the Eligibility criteria specified in Section 1.6 of the Notice of Funding Availability and Request for Applications located here: https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/release_content/attachments/Request%20for%20Applications_13_1.pdf. Criteria 2, 4 and 5, in particular, provide guidance regarding this issue. This grant opportunity is not intended to be a rebate program for individual households or businesses to install solar systems. With regard to the income cap, Section 1.2 of the RFA specifies that "the statute defines low-income residents as those living in households at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI).

Q14: Page 27 of the RFA (under "Business Plan") states that applicants should include a "copy of the customer contract template." Can DOEE please clarify what this means? Should the sample contract be a host site lease agreement, a contract for an individual subscribing LMI household, or is there a different type of document that DOEE would prefer to see?

A14: The word "customer" refers to low-income residents who must benefit from the system through either the electricity provided or receiving the financial equivalent of the electricity generated. However, DOEE would also like to know about successful lease agreements with host sites.