

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Energy and Environment



Green Building Fund Grant
Building Innovation Design Assistance
RFA #2021-2101-USA

Q & A Updated: 1/7/2020

Q: A small team would like to submit an application for this grant. Two of us work in architectural firms, the third in a research institute. We plan to partner with a builder who's construction company is registered in the District and we believe qualifies as a Private Enterprise, per the grant eligibility criteria. We recently discovered that the construction company does not carry all the insurance required by the grant, specifically, the Errors & Omissions and the Cyber Liability coverage. To add this insurance for the period of 10 years stipulated by the grant would cost more than \$20,000. We are wondering how other eligible entities such as non-profits and faith-based organizations meet these insurance requirements and if there is any relief for our group in submitting for the grant without the cyber liability and E&O coverage.

A: No insurance is required for an "applicant". (RFA § 5.1(a) [p 18]) Insurance is required for the grantee, as a condition for receiving funds. (RFA, Appendix 1, ¶ 29; Appendix 6) Neither DOEE nor the District's Office of Risk Management can know the scope and details of the grant until/unless a grant is awarded. After DOEE makes an award, the "winner" may raise the insurance issue for discussion. This is because, as the RFA advises, DOEE may waive a requirement in writing.

The question suggests that the applicant is likely to be an informal partnership among individuals who do not carry personal professional liability insurance because they receive that coverage from their employers. The RFA tries to put the applicants on notice as to likely insurance costs.

The RFA does not require the applicant team who submitted this question to purchase any insurance, unless and until an award is received.

RFA Information Session 12/10/2020

Meeting Location: WebEx

Main Points/Discussion:

Introductions

Grants Overview (Kathleen Berube – DOEE)

A brief overview of the grant program included in this RFA was reviewed, including the outcomes, deliverables, and scoring criteria. Greater detail is provided in the RFA available on the DOEE website, <https://doee.dc.gov/node/1509771>.

Questions and Answers:

1. **Q:** What should an applicant submit?
A: See section 8 of the RFA, Checklist for Applicants.
2. **Q:** How should an applicant submit their completed application?
A: Applications should be emailed to GreenbuildingRFA.Grants@dc.gov no later than 4:30pm ET on January 11, 2021.
3. **Q:** Is the application required to be 10 pages or *up to* 10 pages?
A: The application is not required to be 10 pages.
4. **Q:** Is there any required buy-in from building owner to qualify?
A: No, owner buy-in is not required, but demonstrating that the owner is open to net-zero concepts and construction strengthens the application. Past project teams have conducted analyses on net-zero construction versus code minimum requirements and presented to owners.
5. **Q:** What is deadline for multifamily buildings being required to achieve net-zero energy?
A: Net-zero energy codes are anticipated in 2026. The Clean Energy DC mentions the year 2020, but this isn't being pursued.
6. **Q:** Are there any limitations for federal projects in the district or DC owned projects?
A: No, there are no limitations for federal or DC owned projects located in the District.
7. **Q:** What is timeline for hearing back?
A: It is anticipated to be late February or early March.
8. **Q:** Do you need to have the full design team on board by the time the application is submitted on January 11th? Specifically, do the MEP and structural engineers need to be a part of the design team?
A: It is not required to have the full design team on board by the time the application is submitted. Applicants should refer to the scoring criteria in Section 7.1 for more information.

FAQ

Below is a compilation of frequently asked questions from prior years and may be helpful for applicants:

1. **Q:** How are projects expected to demonstrate their commitment to pursue NZE and/or embodied carbon reduction?
A: Applicants are welcome to provide whatever demonstration of commitment is appropriate to their project. For example, a letter of commitment, codified project goals, or examples of previous projects demonstrating the capacity to deliver NZE and/or embodied carbon performance.

- 2. Q:** Is there a definition for net-zero energy (NZE) or an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) target that applicants need to adhere to?

A: There is no set definition for net-zero energy or EUI target to be utilized for the purposes of this grant; however, the 2017 DC Energy Conservation Code contains Appendix Z, which is DC’s net-zero energy voluntary code and serves as a working definition for net-zero energy performance.
- 3. Q:** What is the timeline for completion of deliverables?

A: All work supported by this grant must be completed by September 30, 2021. The building project itself does not need to be complete by then, but all grant supported activities need to be completely closed out.
- 4. Q:** What is the total amount one applicant can request?

A: \$30,000. An applicant can request up to \$20,000 for NZE design assistance and up to \$10,000 for embodied carbon LCA assistance if they choose to apply for both projects. Applicants can also choose to apply for one of the two projects listed in the RFA.
- 5. Q:** Do projects need to be located in the District of Columbia?

A: Yes.
- 6. Q:** Is this RFA related to the DCRA Net-Zero Energy Program?

A: This grant and DCRA’s Net-Zero Energy Program are complementary programs but unrelated. Participation in one program does not impact participation in the other.
- 7. Q:** Are private individuals able to apply for the grant, or does the lead applicant need to be a business entity?

A: In order to receive funding from the District, the lead applicant would need to have a business license, Certificate of Good Standing, Tax ID, and DUNS numbers.
- 8. Q:** What projects were awarded in the FY2020 NZE Project Design Assistance grant?

A: Three projects were awarded in FY2020. One was a school project, one a commercial building, and one a low rise small low-income multifamily project.
- 9. Q:** Is the grant specifically targeting new construction, or can a major renovation project apply?

A: There is no minimum project scope to be eligible to apply.
- 10. Q:** Is there preference for Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs) in the application process?

A: No.
- 11. Q:** One of the scoring criteria states “The project represents a significant reduction in potential greenhouse gas emissions”. If all projects are net-zero energy, how would their GHG emissions vary?

A: One example would be a large, multifamily building compared to a single family residential building. The GHG savings of a large net-zero building are likely to be much greater than the GHG savings of a small, single-family net-zero building. Applicants are invited to make the case in their applications for how their project is maximizing the GHG emission reductions.
- 12. Q:** Does the building owner need to be part of the project team?

A: No.
- 13. Q:** How should the amount of matching or in-kind funds be determined?

A: The determination for “matching/in-kind” is open to interpretation by the project team. The scope of the matching or in-kind funds must relate to the grant.