

Questions & Answers
Solar Works DC (RFA 2017-1712)
<https://doee.dc.gov/node/1208277>

1. Who is eligible to apply for the Solar Works DC grant?

Private enterprises, nonprofit organizations, including those with IRS 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) determinations, faith-based organizations, government agencies and universities/educational institutions can apply for the Solar Works DC grant. Because the Notice of Funding Availability *incorrectly* prohibited faith-based organizations from applying, DOEE is extending the application deadline until Friday, February 27 at 4:30pm.

2. How many grants will be awarded?

On page 21 of the RFA, in Section 7.2 - Available Funding, it is stated that: “DOEE expects to make an award to a single grantee for the funding amount available.”

3. Will the grantee receive only \$950,000 for training and installation of the solar panels? Will grantees have to: pay a livable/minimum wage for 45-75 students while training them, find rooftops for PV installation, purchase PV panels, and complete installation all for less than one million dollars?

Up to \$950,000 is available per year to achieve the deliverables listed in the grant. The DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) will pay a stipend directly to the program participants for up to 25 hours for non-summer participants, and up to 30 hours for summer participants enrolled in the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (MBSYEP). Living and minimum wages are not required, however, prospective grantees are allowed to supplement training non-summer participants’ stipends as they deem necessary to meet the grant objectives.

4. What are allowable costs?

See section 7, page 24 of the RFA, for allowable costs.

5. Will you give the grantee rooftops? If not, is the grantee supposed to find the rooftops? What exactly do you mean by 60-100 District edifices? Define roof/edifice.

No, DOEE will not provide the grantee with rooftops. The grantee is responsible for identifying rooftops for PV installations. DOEE will share a short list of 30 homeowners that have expressed interest in installations with the grantee.

6. Will you give the grantee a space to conduct training?

No, this is the responsibility of the grantee. The SYEP cohort will be based at a DCPS middle or high school, which can be used for training.

7. How many watts should be produced by the installations?

There is no minimum watt requirement.

8. When will responses to the questions from the public information session and the revised RFA be available?

The responses to questions posed at the public information session will be available on Tuesday, January 24, 2017.

9. Is there a requirement that the equipment used for the installations, specially the Solar PV panels, is made in the United States?

No, this is not a requirement of the grant.

10. Is registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) with the federal government needed?

No, applicants do not need to be registered in SAM as no federal funding is tied to this grant.

11. Is there a percentage of the 60-100 installs that is required to be completed in within a cohort?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

12. Do 60-100 installs have to be completed by Sept 30th? Can they roll over or do they have to be completed each year?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

13. Do multi-family residences and commercial properties count as one rooftop/ installation?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

14. Do both trainings and installations have to take place in the District?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

15. Do program trainees need to complete installs?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

16. What are some of the allowable costs for this grant?

See section 7, page 24 of the RFA, for allowable costs.

17. On page 24 of the RFA under “Program Costs,” it states that DOES will pay stipends of \$8.25 per hour, up to 20 hours per week for non-summer participants. How many weeks are allowable, and are there a maximum amount of hours that DOES would cover at \$8.25? How many total hours do we have to budget within a year for \$8.25 an hour?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

18. In your application will grantees who propose to install more systems closer to 100 vs closer to 60 receive preference?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

19. For the \$950,000 allotted, how many awardees will there be?

Refer to page 21 of the RFA – “DOEE expects to make an award to single grantee for the funding amount available.”

20. Is there an expectation that training outside of PV system installation needs to be a part of the curriculum? Are we primarily conducting installation training, or related training as well?

Refer to page 22, 4b of the RFA. We understand there is more to the business of solar than just installing solar systems on roofs. DOEE recommends a comprehensive training curriculum.

21. On page 15 of the RFA under “Required Documents,” how current do the Certificates of Good Standing have to be?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

22. Will DOES/DOEE be covering workman’s compensation?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

23. Can the application be submitted via email?

Refer to page 8 of the RFA.

24. Page 4, section 1.2 of the RFA – “Low income single family homes, multifamily buildings, and nonprofit owned buildings.” Would churches be considered?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

25. For the scoring criteria, is there any special preference for Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs)?

No, there is no preference for CBEs for this grant.

26. On page 17, section 4.2, there is a discrepancy for the explanation of the scoring criteria that does not match the criteria outlined on page 25 of the RFA. The points awarded for District-based applicants, is it 10 or 5?

See revised RFA released on Friday, January 27.

27. Can you please confirm that 15 double-spaced pages is the required length of the proposal for submission?

Refer to page 10.

28. Of the \$950,000, what are allowable costs?

Refer to the RFA for allowable program costs.

29. Do applicants have to be based in the District?

No.

30. Are we allowed to vary hours for program participants per week?

Please refer to page 22/ 23 “Program Costs” (a) and (b) of the RFA for the allowable hours per week for each cohort. The applicant can only provide additional funds to cover any additional hours for the two non-MBSYEP-GZEP cohorts.

31. What is the timeframe for program participants for each of the cohorts?

Please refer to page 23 of the RFA.

32. Does the training venue have to be high schools and middle schools for the summer cohort?

Yes. Workman’s compensation will only cover students who directly report to a government-owned facility. DOES will not cover workman’s compensation for participants at non-District facilities, where the District is not insured. DOEE will identify and secure the school site dedicated for the summer solar cohort, and will notify the grantee of the location after the award is made.

33. Does DOEE provide program participants for the summer cohort?

Refer to page 21, “6.” of the RFA. DOEE would like the applicant to establish an intake and recruitment process in coordination with DOEE and DOES. Program participants for the summer cohort must be registered through the DOES MBSYEP. DOEE has found that there is a higher retention when SYEP participants are interested in the subject matter and live close to their day-to-day work location.

34. Will the GZEP schedule from last year be the same format this year?

The applicant should propose in accordance with the allowable hours listed on page 23, “b.” of the RFA. Applicants can flex the hours within a two week pay period, but may not exceed 50 hours every two weeks for 18-21 year olds or 60 hours every two weeks for 22-24 year olds.

35. Will DOEE identify and secure the single-family homes for installation?

The grantee is responsible for identifying and securing low-income single-family homes in the District for installation. DOEE will share an existing list of 30 homeowners who may be interested in obtaining solar systems. There is no guarantee or requirement that a homeowner(s) on that list must participate in this program.

36. Will DOEE supply metro cards and other stipends?

DOES provides the summer SYEP participants with a small transportation stipend for the first week of work. The applicant should build in any additional transportation costs for all cohorts into their proposed budget.

37. When submitting a budget, should applicants combine the salaries of all staff funded by the grant or separate each staff member?

Separate each staff member (by their title and hourly rate) when creating the proposed budget.

38. Define low-income household?

For the purposes of this grant, the statute defines low income residents as those living in households at or below 80% area median income (AMI). DC Off. Code § 8-1774.16 (g) (2017).

39. In reference to page 22, #8 of the RFA, will DOEE be able to acquire the rights or sell our curriculum, program and other materials to a third party group?

Program materials are non-transferable and royalty-free. DOEE will have access rights for agency use, but we will not give materials to a third party.

An applicant should mark information contained in their proposal considered to be trade secrets or confidential business information.

40. Should applicants submit a 2017 budget with its application if its fiscal year begins in January?

Yes, see page 15. The applicant must submit its full budget, including projected income, for the current fiscal year. Also, the applicant should submit a comparison of budgeted versus actual income and expenses of the fiscal year to date.

41. Define a complete installation.

A complete installation is when Solar Photovoltaic system equipment is installed and interconnected with District of Columbia code compliant inspections. A complete installation also has the authorization to operate (ATO) from Pepco.

42. Does DOEE require that the applicant submit a fully detailed curriculum, or is an outline sufficient?

Applicants should meet the grant requirements related to the curriculum. See page 20 and 21 for additional details.

43. Is there a requirement that the equipment used for the installation, especially the Solar PV panels, are going to be mandated to “Made in USA”?

No, there is not an equipment sourcing mandate for this RFA.

44. For the purposes of this grant, what is the definition of a low-income single-family home in the District?

Single-family home: A single-family home is a structure with up to four dwelling units.

Dwelling unit: A dwelling unit is occupied as a separate living quarter, and may be a house, apartment, condominium unit, group of rooms, or a single room.

Eligibility criteria:

- For a single-family home with only one dwelling unit, that household must earn up to or less than 80% Area Median Income (AMI);
- For a single-family home with two to four dwelling units, 50% or more of the households in the building must earn up to or less than 80% AMI;
- Single-family homes may be individually- or master-metered. For master-metered homes, the applicant must clearly explain how the solar system will benefit the eligible household(s).
- PV systems must be installed in a manner that benefits the eligible household(s).

If the grantee is unsure if a home qualifies as a single-family home, the grantee may request written clarification from DOEE.

(DOEE may change or update the definition of a low-income single-family home in the District for future grants or projects.)

45. Is the intent of the grant to cover 100 percent of the cost of material, installation and labor for the targeted 60—100 installations?

Yes, however grantees can propose ways to leverage funds to meet the grant objectives.

46. Can SREC's be owned by the installer or transferred to an entity that may finance or cover any cost not covered by the grant or the homeowner?

See 4b at the top of page 21/22 for a description of SRECs. Entities that finance may receive the benefits of SRECs. Grantees must answer the questions listed.

47. Can the panels installed on rooftops belong to an entity other than the homeowner?

See 4d at the top of page 21/22 for a description of terms required and page 22, point 9, for what contracts must include regarding homeowner ownership.

48. Can the ITC (tax credits) be applied for and transferred to some other entity than the home owner?

Yes, as long as you comply with the RFA requirements. See 4c the top of page 21/22 and point 9 on page 22.

Information Session Attendees

In-Person Attendees:

1. Reyna Askew, GRID Alternatives, raskew@gridalternatives.org
2. Sienna Arku, GRID Alternatives, sarku@gridalternatives.org
3. Lilia Abron, Peer Consulting, abronl@peerpc.com
4. Kevin Doyle, SMART, kdoyle@trinityca.com
5. Antonio Harrison, Greenscape Environmental, aharrison@greenscapeenvironmental.com
6. Teria Drayton, Greenscape Environmental, tdrayton@greenscapeenvironmental.com
7. Candace Lyles, WDC Solar, gogreen@wdc solar.com
8. Catherine Hogan, Greater Washington Urban League, chogan@gwul.org
9. Jamie Donovan, Dept of General Services, Jamie.donovan@dc.gov
10. Sumit Bhatnager, Green Brilliance, Sumit.bhatnagar@greenbrilliance.com
11. Warner Session, Session Law Firm, whs@warnersessions.com
12. Tad Wood, Solar Saves, twood@solarsaves.com
13. Tarek Azar, District Energy, tazar@districtenergyinc.com
14. Harris Trobman, UDC, harris.trobman@udc.edu

Conference Line Attendees:

1. Veronica Jenkins, Homes for Hope, VeronicaJenkins@msn.com
2. Nicole Steele, GRID Alternatives, nsteele@gridalternatives.org
3. Anthony Chuukwu, Citiwide Vocational Center, info@mycitiwide.com
4. Adam Jibril, Department of Employment Services, Jibril.Adam@dc.gov
5. Mr. Gordon, United Planning Organization (no email available)
6. Jacob Newman, Latin American Youth Center (no email available)
7. Anne Cademenos, GRID Alternatives, academenos@gridalternatives.org