**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q1: Are we allowed to pick a bid before completing the application?**

PSE encourages you to select a solar installer after receiving multiple bids. The selected installer can help complete several parts of the grant application.

**Q2: What is Total Solar Resource Fraction?**

Total Solar Resource Fraction is a measure of the shading present on the site. An installer who completed a site assessment can provide this number, which is expressed as a percentage.

**Q3: Can we download application and use it to type our grant application information?**

Yes, we prefer you download the application and type answers in the area provided. **Please send the completed application form in the Microsoft Word (.docx or .doc) file format**. Supplemental documents may be submitted as Word, PDF, Excel, or other common file formats as appropriate.

**Q4: How should we include or where should we describe leveraged in-kind donations?**

Any in-kind donations should be described in the narrative question 15 “Describe efforts to ensure that the proposed budget represents the maximum value for the cost of the project.” Please describe any commitments or expectations of applicant to recognize in-kind donors. Do not include the value of in-kind contributions in section C. Project Budget; this section should only include actual costs to the applicant.

**Q5: Can one agency submit applications for more than one building/site?**

Yes, an agency may submit applications for more than one site. However, PSE will prioritize awarding funds to multiple, geographically diverse agencies before awarding funds to two sites.

**Q6: Can an applicant get information on the grid capacity to accommodate solar in the area of a proposed site prior to submitting the application?**

Your selected installer can check with our Customer Connected Solar team about the transformer capacity prior to bidding a project. The team will do their best to provide them information in a timely manner. However, it is not a requirement to submit a bid. PSE will evaluate the feasibility during the grant selection process and may raise that as an issue to discuss during negotiations on the grant award. PSE may work with the applicant and their installer to address any potential gird/transformer capacity issues; including possible solutions such as a different project size.

**Q7: Are agencies required to enter into a contract with an installer prior to submitting a grant application?**

PSE prefers projects that have a contract in place that extends to the award notification date. Contracts may be contingent on award of funding. However, if contracting prior to application is not possible due to public bidding requirements or other circumstances, please explain these circumstances in your application and include a firm bid from your preferred installer.

**Q8: What type of building does the array need to be installed on? Does there need to be a direct savings to the low-income or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) customers?**

The array can be installed on any part of the property owned or leased by the applicant, as long as there is a direct benefit to the people the organization serves. Examples of benefits include direct savings for residents; or a reduction in the organization’s operational expenses that allows the organization to put more money to serving their clients.

**Q9: Will this be a prevailing wage project?**

Prevailing wage is not a requirement except where the applicant is otherwise required to pay prevailing wages.

**Q10: Will these grants be offered again?**

While not confirmed, PSE’s Green Power Program anticipates running another Community Support Grant Program in 2021, the focus of which has not been determined.

**Q11: Is there a way to approximate the out of pocket expenses needed to supplement the grant funds?  Is there a way to receive a rough project estimate without getting too involved with a contractor?**

As project costs vary based on the site, we suggest you contact multiple installers for bids to gain an accurate understanding of total project costs.  However, receiving a bid should not bind you to that contractor.  Installers may conduct a preliminary bid remotely that will help with initial planning, and they may be able to help prioritize sites as well.

As you think about potential out of pocket expenses, here is an outline of eligible versus non-eligible funds for the grant opportunity:

Green Power Community Grants will fund 100% of the design, installation, permitting and equipment costs of new, grid-connected, solar PV systems only. Projects located on an existing building may include a contingency fund for necessary electrical upgrades, representing no more than 5% of the total project budget.

Awards will not fund:

* Structural or site improvements required prior to project construction such as canopies, roofing, tree removal, lighting, flooring, and structural reinforcement
* Fees incurred for project estimates or bids
* Site evaluation expenses
* Engineering expenses incurred prior to project funding
* Landscaping costs
* Construction bond costs
* Future maintenance or repair costs
* Donated, in-kind, or volunteer materials or labor

**Q12: Can an applicant use bids that a general contractor has solicited to select a solar installer? Or does the applicant need to solicit those bids?**

Bids solicited by the general contractor will serve the purpose.  We ask for multiple bids to ensure that the applicant is making an informed choice of installer, so it doesn’t matter whether the bids are solicited by the applicant or a third party on behalf of the applicant.

**Q13: Does this grant include installations on non-residential buildings?**

Yes, the array can be installed on non-residential buildings. Please also see the response to Q8, above.

**Q14: Is it acceptable to use remote software to preliminarily design solar? Or does PSE require on-site data and the accompanying report to confirm the TSRF?**

A remote estimation of TSRF will be sufficient for a preliminary assessment.  However, if the TSRF is borderline PSE may request an onsite SunEye evaluation to ensure project feasibility.

**Q15: We received two proposals from our solar installer. One proposal will cover the costs of our planned solar panels. The other proposal would add significantly more panels. Should we submit the smaller project with less energy savings or the larger project with more energy savings that is close to the maximum award amount?**

You may consider submitting both proposals. PSE can then consider both options and evaluate based on selection criteria and available funding.

**Q16: Our organization has individual meters for each apartment but we also have a centralized meter for the building that the agency covers. Would this building be eligible? Or do the individual meters disqualify it?**

The metering set-up, outlined in your question, does not disqualify for this grant opportunity.  Metering configuration will be an important topic to discuss with solar contractors when obtaining bids and discussing feasibility and system sizing/design.  We suggest applicants, and their solar contractor, look at the amount of energy use billed to applicable metered accounts.  Keep in mind that a solar array will only reduce the electric bill of the metered load that it is connected to (or one other meter on the property that bills to the same customer).

Possible solutions may include:

1. An applicant may propose multiple systems, each interconnected separately and sized to offset the individual loads with the cost and ownership of the arrays being grouped together for one grant.  The organization would need to decide if they want to put electric billing for the units served by solar in their name or if they’re ok with the grant being used to lower individual tenants’ bills.

2. An applicant may propose a single interconnected system to offset “house load” or common areas, which would reduce organizational operating costs.

3. Funding \*may\* be considered to rewire the building so that all units are served by one or two PSE meters and a single solar array could then be used to offset full building usage.  However, this option may hinder project cost competiveness and timeline.  Also, for this option to be feasible the property owner/manager would need to be willing to put all electric service into their name indefinitely, rather than having individual tenants pay their electric bills.

We recommend discussing these options with a solar contractor(s) to better understand the implications of each.

**Q17: We are currently in the process of applying for a Green Power Community Support Grant. If we apply for a PSE Foundation community grant, will that disqualify us from potentially being a recipient of the Green Power Community Support Grant?**

An applicant will not be disqualified from Green Power Community Support Grant consideration for applying to or receiving a PSE Foundation community grant.

**Q18: Does the project conceptualization need to be a rendering?**

The conceptualization does not need to be a rendering. An example of an acceptable conceptualization is an image of the existing roof (e.g. from Google Earth) with the proposed solar superimposed. This is typically part of an installer’s bid.

**Q19: Does the assessor need to assess the structural integrity of the building if panels are to be placed on the roof?**

The installer who conducts the solar assessment does not need to provide an engineering analysis of the building’s capability to support solar panels, but they should assess and comment on the state of the roof itself. An engineering analysis of the building’s structural suitability to support solar may be required as part of the building permit process.

**Q20: Does the solar contractor only need to provide the information in the ‘Project Information’ table on page 3 of the application?**

The assessor/installer should provide the ‘Project Information’ on page 3 of the application and they may also contribute to the list of ‘Required Application Documents’ on page 7.

**Q21: Will the winning applicant’s account be set-up as a net metering customer whereby they will get credit for electricity produced in excess of what they use (similar to a residential net metering customer)?**

Grants are for solar installations that, when completed, will provide all of the environmental and energy benefits to the recipient/account holder at the site the project is interconnected.  Projects up to 100 kilowatts are eligible for Net Metering on the PSE electric account for the selected site.

**Q22: Is there a cap to the net metering credit they can accumulate?**

Net Metering is for projects up to 100 kW in capacity. PSE keeps track of the energy used and the amount of excess power a system generates. The energy you send back to the grid is credited against your usage so you only pay for the net amount of energy that PSE provides, plus your basic monthly charge. If you produce more energy than you use within a given bill period, your net excess generation is added to your net metering bank.  Banked credit will apply to energy usage in subsequent bill periods.  There is no limit to the number of kWhs that can be banked, but per state law, net metering credits expire on March 31 of each year.  For further details, you can review the Net Metering Rate Schedule 150 at [www.pse.com/netmetering](http://www.pse.com/netmetering).

**Q23: The RFP says successful applicants will be responsible for “maintaining RECs” – what does that entail?**

There is no action required by the successful applicant to maintain RECs.  This simply means that the applicant will retain that benefit, and will not sell them.

**Q24: I understand that our organization cannot sell the RECs…does PSE claim them for your own benefit?**

No, PSE does not claim the RECs.  Ownership remains with the successful applicant.

**Q25: If the successful applicant’s panels are damaged, they might not have capital to repair/replace equipment. What would happen then?**

Warranties should be considered when evaluating bids.  Depending on the type of damage, property insurance may cover the panels.

**Q26: Will PSE provide applicants with information about whether the site has sufficient service capacity to add the solar array?**

If there is concern about the size of the transformer serving the building, a solar installer, along with the customer, can contact us at [netmetering@pse.com](mailto:netmetering@pse.com) with the meter number and proposed system size and PSE can provide a quick analysis.

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**Q27: Can a solar installer incorporate the cost of a structural engineering assessment that covers whether the roof can hold the weight of the installation as a part of their fee, and thus a part of the grant application cost request?**

PSE will not reimburse applicants for engineering evaluation work that takes place prior to being awarded a grant, but an applicant may include an evaluation expense, incurred after project funding, as a project expense, if it is necessary in order to complete the project.  To be clear, structural improvements are not covered by grant awards.

Additional questions can be submitted to [psegreenpower@pse.com](mailto:psegreenpower@pse.com) with “Green Power Grant” in the subject line. Answers will be posted biweekly at [pse.com/greenpowergrant](https://www.pse.com/greenpowergrant).