

Solar Grants

Information for applicants

Puget Sound Energy (PSE)'s Solar Grants are funding to increase equitable access to the benefits of solar. Over the past seven years, PSE has awarded over \$4,800,000 in total grant funding to over 60 local solar projects.

Who should apply?

Eligible applicants are:

- Community-based organizations, government agencies and Tribal entities serving historically marginalized communities
- Applicants who can showcase how savings they receive from the solar array will be used to directly benefit historically marginalized communities
- PSE electric customers

Priority will be given to:

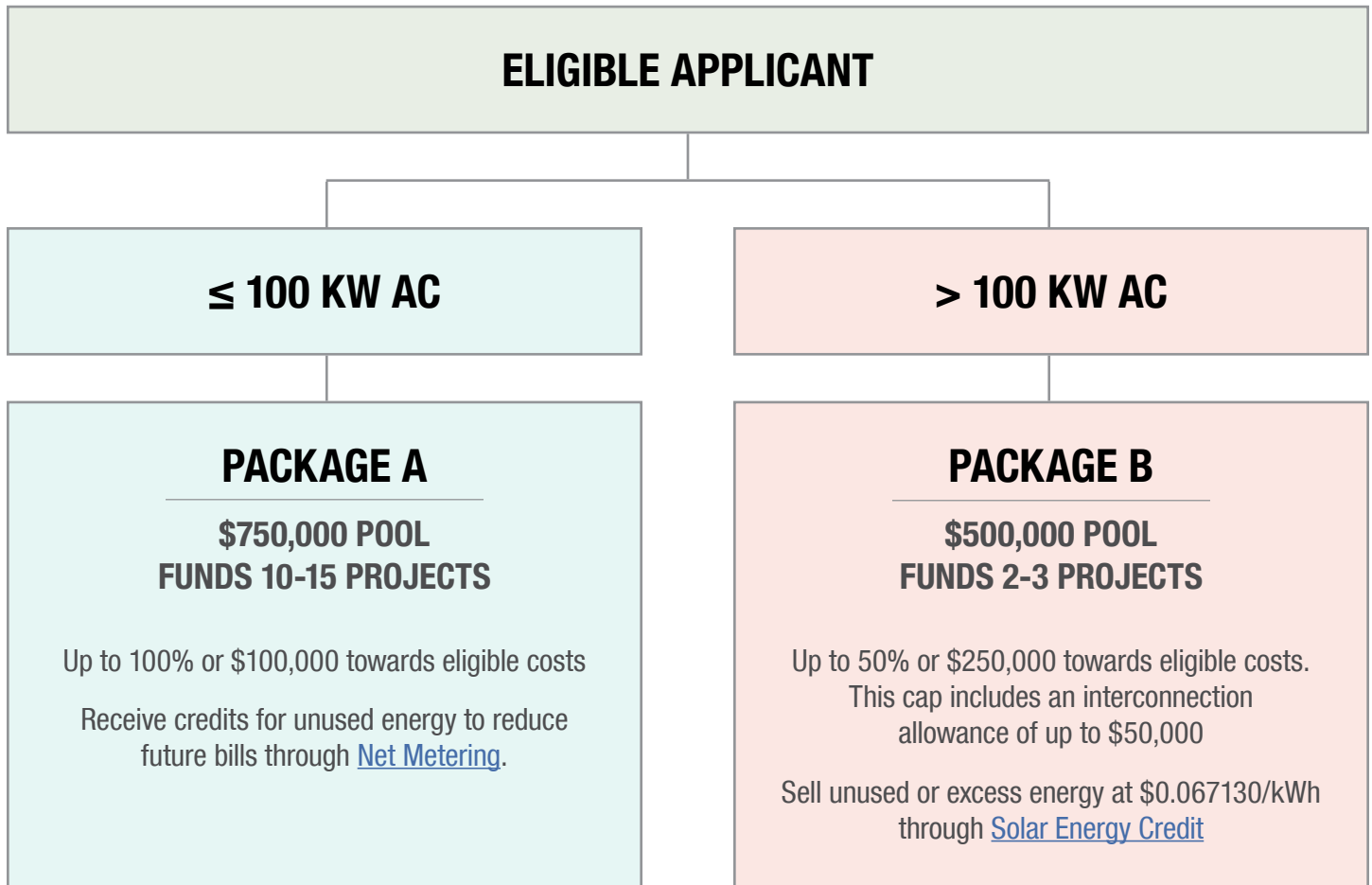
- Applicants serving communities with deepest need. Communities with deepest need experience multiple compounding factors that hinder their ability to access adequate resources. Examples include but are not limited to: communities without housing, communities experiencing linguistic isolation, older adults experiencing social isolation, persons with mental or physical health conditions.
- Tribal entities. PSE has a stated goal to allocate 40% of grant funding to Tribal projects.
- Applicants who have not previously received solar grant funding from PSE.
- Projects that include a workforce development opportunities for historically marginalized community members.

Additional requirements of grantees/projects:

- Proposed projects must receive sufficient sunlight, as determined by a solar installer. The total solar resource fraction (TSRF) must be at least a 75% average of all points in the proposed solar array.
- Property that solar arrays are installed on may be owned or leased. If the property is leased, the applicant must demonstrate project support from the property owner and affirm that they will be in that space for at least five years.
- Projects must separately apply for and complete interconnection to PSE's electrical system. Please keep in mind that interconnection studies may be required for projects over 100 kW AC and these studies may impact timeline and incur additional project costs. Your selected solar installer will help you with this process..
- Grantees must maintain insurance coverage of the solar system for a minimum of five years, and PSE recommends maintaining insurance for the life of the system.
- Grantees must retain [Renewable Energy Certificates \(RECs\)](#) for the life of the project or sell them to PSE. RECs are a market-based instrument that represent the non-power, "green" attributes of renewable electricity generation. Grantees comply simply by not selling these attributes to any entity other than PSE.

How much funding is available?

PSE has up to \$1,250,000 to disburse in the 2024 round. Depending on the size of your solar project, two funding packages are available.



Funding for Package A is made possible by [Green Power](#) and [Solar Choice](#) participants who opt to pay extra on their bill to support renewable energy. Funding for Package B is made possible by the [Solar Energy Credit](#) program.

Which costs are eligible?

Eligible:

- Design, installation, permitting, meter, interconnection and equipment costs of grid-connected, solar systems
- Efforts to raise awareness about the benefits of solar within the recipients' community (in an amount not to exceed \$1,000)
- Projects located on an existing building may include a contingency fund for necessary electrical upgrades (e.g. for electrical panels), representing no more than 5% of the total project budget

Ineligible:

- Structural or site improvements required prior to project construction such as canopies, roofing, tree removal, landscaping, lighting, flooring, and structural reinforcement
- Fees incurred for project estimates or bids
- Site evaluation expenses
- Engineering expenses incurred prior to project funding
- Construction bond costs
- Equipment (e.g. monitors) used to display solar production at the site
- Future maintenance or repair costs
- Donated, in-kind, or volunteer materials or labor

How will applications be evaluated?

Once your application is submitted, a partner of PSE will reach out to schedule an interview. The purpose of these interviews is to provide PSE an opportunity to ask any follow up questions and for the applicant to provide more detail to any parts of their application. The interview will be approximately 60 minutes in duration.

Then, all applications are discussed at length by a panel of internal PSE staff and member's of [PSE's Equity Advisory Group \(EAG\)](#). EAG members are external advisors to PSE and are advocates for historically marginalized community members.

During the review, the panel will consider project feasibility and readiness as pass/fail. As long as a project is likely to be completed as planned, the review panel will select projects based on:

- Community impact (80%): How and to what magnitude will the project positively impact historically marginalized community members? Does the applicant demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?
- Education and outreach (10%): Will this project utilize unique marketing, education and/or outreach tactics to raise awareness of community-based clean energy within the applicant's community?
- Workforce development (10%): Does the project provide any workforce development opportunities to low-income and/or historically marginalized community members?

What is the application and award timeline?

Throughout 2024

June 4: Grant application released

June 12, 12–1 p.m.: [Link to recording](#) of June 12 applicant Q&A session

June 19, 12–1 p.m.: [Link to recording](#) of June 19 applicant Q&A session

Before July 31: Contact Spark Northwest for grant writing assistance (optional and space is limited)

August 13: Final day to submit questions to psegreenpower@pse.com

August 14: Applications due by 5 p.m. (PST)

August – October: Applicants participate in grant interview

October – November: Review panel assesses projects and makes final funding decisions

November – December: Notification of award

November – December: Optional application feedback offered to unsuccessful applicants

2025–2026 (depending on project size): Projects completed and commissioned

One year after project completion: Grantee will report on how the savings they received from the solar array were used to directly benefit historically marginalized communities

I qualify and want to apply. What next?

1. Gain support within your organization and with any community members who may be impacted by construction of the solar project.
2. Contact Spark Northwest (grant.support@sparknorthwest.org) to discuss eligibility for optional grant writing assistance.
3. Contact solar installer(s) to help you conceptualize a project. PSE strongly encourages applicants to obtain multiple bids on the project to ensure your needs are met and pricing is competitive. Please see the “Solar Contractor List” for contact information of solar installers in your area.
4. Select your preferred installer.
5. Submit any questions to psegreenpower@pse.com on or before August 13. Responses will be sent directly to the applicant and posted biweekly on pse.com/applysolargrant in an FAQ format.
6. Complete and submit your application to psegreenpower@pse.com, on or before August 14 at 5 p.m. (PST).