

## Clean Green Schools Initiative (PON 4924) – Webinar FAQ (5-6-26)

### Eligibility

- Who is eligible to participate in the program?
  - All public school districts across NYS that are designated as Priority Districts or public school buildings, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) buildings which are located in a [disadvantaged community](#) are eligible to participate in the program.
- Where can I find the Priority District list?
  - The Priority District list can be found [here](#).
- Are charter schools located in a disadvantaged community eligible for this PON?
  - No, charter schools are not eligible to participate in the program.
- Are private schools eligible for funding?
  - No, private schools are not eligible to participate in the program.
- Are administration and support buildings eligible to participate in this program or is the program only for educational buildings?
  - Administration and support buildings are eligible when combined with an educational building that serves students. Administration and support buildings are not eligible as a stand-alone application.
- Could you confirm if the New York City School Construction Authority schools are eligible to participate in the program?
  - Yes, all New York City public schools are eligible to participate in the program.
- Can individual public schools in NYC apply or only a school district?
  - Yes, individual public schools in NYC can apply, but all projects should be discussed with Meredith McDermott (Chief Sustainability & Decarbonization Officer - NYC Public Schools) before submitting a proposal to the program.
- Are BOCES eligible for funding?
  - Yes, a BOCES building is eligible for funding if it is located in a [disadvantaged community](#).
- I also work for BOCES and we rent our campus buildings. Are we still eligible if we lease the building?
  - Buildings should be owned. Please call us directly to discuss the building ownership situation (518-362-0597).

- The PON states that “Projects must only include buildings which are in a Priority District or located in a disadvantaged community, with the exception of school district heat pump projects. Proposed school district heat pump projects in non-Priority Districts must include at least one building which is located in a disadvantaged community.” What does this mean?
  - This means that if your district is not a Priority District and you are submitting a proposal for a district energy heat pump project, the project must include at least one building which is located in a disadvantaged community, but it can also include public school buildings which are not located in a disadvantaged community. District energy (DE) systems use a piping network to distribute thermal energy to multiple buildings from a central source to provide space heating, water heating, cooling, or process loads. District energy systems are also referred to as thermal energy networks (TENs).

### **Application and Participation Process**

- Where can we find the application?
  - The Clean Green Schools Initiative Program Opportunity Notice (PON 4924) is located [here](#). This website has a link to all of the proposal documents in addition to the online portal where you submit your proposal (see "Apply Online" link).
- This program requires an energy study or equivalent analysis completed at the time of an application. Can you discuss the energy study that needs to be completed?
  - An energy study or equivalent analysis is requested to confirm that the school is aware of the proposed project impacts and will proceed with project implementation promptly. We are not dictating the level of the analysis, but the energy study or equivalent analysis must provide enough information to fill out Attachment E – Building Impacts Table.
- Does NYSERDA have funding to support an energy study?
  - Yes, NYSERDA provides funding to support energy studies through the [FlexTech Program](#) (PON 4192). The FlexTech Program solicitation can be found [here](#).
- Does the energy study need to be executed through the FlexTech Program or can we coordinate an energy study outside of the FlexTech Program?
  - No, the energy study does not need to be executed through the FlexTech Program.
- If funded through the FlexTech Program, does the energy study need to be completed and approved by NYSERDA before applying to the Clean Green Schools Initiative?
  - No, the energy study does not need to be completed and approved by NYSERDA before applying to the Clean Green Schools Initiative. A first draft of the energy study could be submitted to the Program.

- Can schools that still need to conduct an energy study expect accelerated support through FlexTech to receive their study in time for the Clean Green Schools Initiative proposal due date?
  - No, new FlexTech studies being submitted to support a Clean Green Schools Initiative proposal will not be accelerated through the approval process. After an applicant submits an application to the FlexTech Program, it will take approximately 14 weeks to receive a Purchase Order. The timeframe is dependent on how quickly the applicant can respond to comments and it may vary during periods of high programmatic activity.
- If the energy studies were already completed and incentivized, is there a list of those completed studies?
  - No, we don't publicize the list of schools who have completed energy studies through our programs.
- Can a school apply to both Category 1 and Category 2?
  - Yes, applicants may submit multiple proposal packages to either or both categories. If a proposed project includes measures from both Categories 1 and 2, submit the proposal package to Category 1. School districts can submit as many project applications as they desire.
- What is the timeframe for project awarding?
  - We anticipate that schools who are selected to receive awards under the program will be issued an award letter in December 2026. After this point, the awarded projects will work with the NYSERDA Project Managers to negotiate the contracts. It can take six to twelve months to negotiate the contract, execute the contract and receive a purchase order.
- What is the timeframe for completing projects?
  - Unless otherwise negotiated, all work funded under the program must be completed and invoiced within five (5) years of contract execution.
- Will this initiative have multiple funding rounds, if projects need more time and cannot submit in August?
  - Yes, NYSERDA anticipates coordinating Round 4 of the Clean Green Schools Initiative in Q1 2027.
- If a project is given notice of award, could they begin a portion of the project prior to finalizing the contract?
  - Applicants must not have started construction on a project prior to NYSERDA issuing an award letter. Work completed prior to NYSERDA issuing an award letter is ineligible for funding. Once an award letter is made, NYSERDA reserves the right to issue a pre-agreement letter to allow for work to be completed after an award letter is issued, but before a contract is signed in limited circumstances and only with explicit NYSERDA approval.

- We have an SED approved HVAC replacement project set to go to construction this summer. Is it too late to consider the NYSERDA funding? Or might it still be eligible?
  - Applicants must not have started construction on the project prior to NYSERDA issuing an award letter, which are anticipated to be issued in December 2026, so a project starting construction this summer would be ineligible.
  
- Is there a formal Scope of Work required in the Proposal Package?
  - A complete proposal package shall include the following:
    - Completion of the series of questions presented in NYSERDA’s online portal submission platform.
    - Climate Hazard Screening Form (Attachment A)
      - This form must be completed for each building included in the project.
    - School Authorization Form, if applicable (Attachment B)
    - Proposal Template (Attachment D)
    - Building Impacts Table (Attachment E)
    - Milestone Payment Schedule (Attachment F)
    - Energy study or equivalent analysis used to select the project components
  - Please visit the [solicitation website](#) to review these documents.
  
- Can you please clarify in what scenario that we, the school district, would have a proposer submit the proposal on our behalf? In that case, would they complete the School Authorization Form (Attachment B)?
  - Attachment B (School Authorization Form) is required if a school or school district is not the Proposer of a proposal. Some schools have consultants apply on behalf of their schools for efficiency purposes (e.g. saves the school time) and because some of the proposal questions require technical knowledge. If the proposal is selected to receive an award under the Program, the school or school district is the entity NYSERDA contracts with and is the responsible party for the execution of the scope of work and the receiver of funding disbursements.

## **Funding**

- How does this funding impact building aid?
  - Through a provision in the enacted 2022/2023 NYS Budget, this program incentivizes school districts to invest in clean energy and energy efficient projects that will improve indoor air quality and reduce emissions by eliminating the reduction in Building Aid that districts would otherwise face for projects receiving a grant through NYSERDA's Clean Green Schools Initiative.
  
- If a school is already using their full maximum cost allowance (MCA) for a building, will the amounts related to the NYSERDA grant still be fully aidable for that same building?

- Clean Green Schools Initiative grants do not count in MCA calculations. Additionally, a 5-year rolling MCA will not be calculated for a project funded solely by the Clean Green Schools Initiative.
- Could you clarify the \$10 M cap for multiple buildings in a district versus the \$15 M cap for school districts?
  - Multiple building projects are subject to the \$10,050,000 cap. School districts can submit as many project applications as they desire. Given the availability of funding, school districts will be capped at \$15,000,000 from the available funds and those funds will be allotted in the order of ranks. If additional funds are made available, additional projects will be considered in the order of ranks.
- How much funding is available for Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities?
  - For a one building project:
    - Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities targeted at students and educational staff are capped at \$30,000 (see PON - Section V – Activity Type #1 and #2).
    - Up to \$50,000 of additional funding is available for School Facilities Staff Training to support operation and maintenance training on new equipment and building systems installed as a result of the awarded project (see PON - Section V, Activity Type #3).
  - For a multiple building project:
    - Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities targeted at students and educational staff are capped at \$100,000 (see PON - Section V – Activity Type #1 and #2).
    - Up to \$50,000 of additional funding is available for School Facilities Staff Training to support operation and maintenance training on new equipment and building systems installed as a result of the awarded project (see PON - Section V, Activity Type #3).
  - See page 8 of the [PON](#) to review additional details associated with the Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development funding.

## Eligible Projects

- Will Category 2 cover targeted energy audits for insulation of mechanical systems, or for the repairs highlighted in the report?
  - No, Category 2 (Energy Load Reduction Projects) does not cover energy audits for the insulation of mechanical systems or for the repairs highlighted in the report. Conversion and insulation of distribution systems (e.g., steam to hot water) to support potential future electrification is eligible under Category 2. With that being said, NYSERDA is in the process of developing a Mechanical Insulation Energy Savings Program which will pay for the purchase

and installation of mechanical insulation upgrades. We anticipate the program will be available in late 2026.

- Are maintenance projects for currently installed HVAC cooling apparatus that might save energy by 20%, rather than new equipment installation, eligible under the PON?
  - No, maintenance projects are not eligible under the program. Please review the list of eligible projects on page 6 and 7 of the [PON](#).
- Could you address the eligibility of thermal energy storage, both sensible and phase change in conjunction with heat pumps/chillers?
  - Thermal energy storage may be combined with a heat pump system, but please reach out to [Hannah.Morgan@nyserda.ny.gov](mailto:Hannah.Morgan@nyserda.ny.gov) to discuss the specific use case of the thermal energy storage combined with a heat pump system.
- If portions of a building are to be covered by a heat pump system with a supplemental fossil-fuel system, would this project qualify as Category 1?
  - Yes, any project that contains a heat pump should be submitted to Category 1 (Clean Heating and Cooling Projects). The program cannot pay for any supplemental systems that use fossil fuels. In addition, system conversion to natural gas or other fossil fuel is ineligible and full system replacements to new fossil fuel-based systems are ineligible.
- Can real-time monitoring solutions be funded through the Clean Green Schools Initiative if the use is directly tied to energy use reduction and/or extreme heat resilience?
  - Yes, real-time monitoring solutions may be considered as part of a larger project, when completed in combination with any eligible primary activities (e.g. Category 1 or Category 2 project).
- Is solar PV eligible if it is being used to offset heat pump electrical load?
  - Yes, solar PV may be considered as part of a larger project, when completed in combination with any eligible primary activities (e.g. Category 1 or Category 2 project).
- Is zero emission bus (ZEB) charging infrastructure covered with this funding?
  - No, ZEB charging infrastructure installations are not eligible through the program. The NY School Bus Incentive Program (NYSBIP) provides funding for ZEB charging infrastructure. Please e-mail [sophie.patka@nyserda.ny.gov](mailto:sophie.patka@nyserda.ny.gov) to learn more about this opportunity.
- Can funding go towards engineering/design for heat pump projects?
  - Yes, if a proposal is selected to receive an award under the Program, a portion of the award can be used for the engineering/design of the project through Task 2 - Construction Documents and Project Filing.

## **Other**

- Will a list of attendees be shared?
  - Yes, the Webinar FAQ document will be sent to all of the attendees, so you will see the list of individuals who participated in the webinar.