

Clean Green Schools Initiative Webinar FAQ

Eligibility:

Is there more guidance on determining whether a district is eligible? Districts need to be high needs OR disadvantaged, not both correct?

Please refer to the list of eligible schools, located on the Clean Green Schools Initiative Website: <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/-/media/Files/Programs/p12-schools/Eligible-Under-Resourced-Schools.xlsx>

All existing public school buildings across NYS that are designated as High-Needs by the [New York State Education Department](#) **or** located in a [disadvantaged community](#) are eligible to participate in the program. Buildings do not need to be both High Needs and located in a disadvantaged community.

Is the list of eligible schools located on the Clean Green Schools Initiative website comprehensive or could there be buildings missing?

This is the current list of eligible schools based on the [disadvantaged community's](#) definition and the New York State Educational Department's High-Needs [list](#). If you have questions about this list or you think your building should be eligible please reach out to P12Schools@nyserda.ny.gov.

What is a high-needs district?

The New York State Education Department categorizes school districts using a need-to-resource capacity (N/RC) index. The N/RC index is a measure of a school district's ability to meet the needs of its students with local resources, based on a ratio of the estimated poverty percentage to the combined wealth ratio. High-Need categories include High N/RC: New York City, High N/RC: Large City Districts, High N/RC: Urban-Suburban Districts, and High N/RC: Rural Districts.

The New York State Education Department Need-to-Resource Capacity list is from 2009-2010. Is there a more up-to-date list available?

No, this is the most current list and it was developed by the New York State Education Department.

Are BOCES buildings eligible for funding?

Yes, a BOCES building is eligible for funding if it is located in a [disadvantaged community](#).

Are Charter schools eligible for funding?

Charter schools are not eligible to participate in the program.

Are private schools eligible for funding?

Private schools are not eligible to participate in the program.

Are schools required to pay into the System Benefits Charge (SBC) on their electric utility bill to be eligible to participate in the program?

System Benefits Charge (SBC) contribution is not required for participation in this program.

Is the NYC Board of Education considered one or multiple districts?

The NYC Board of Education consists of 32 districts. A list of districts can be found [here](#).

Are non-academic buildings (e.g. bus garages and admin buildings) eligible to participate in the program?

Non-academic buildings may be included as part of a larger project which includes academic buildings, but they are not eligible as a standalone project. In addition, the non-academic buildings must be part of a [high-need district](#) or located in a [disadvantaged community](#) to be eligible to participate in the program.

Is Track I a pre-requisite for Track II participation?

No, participation in Track I is not a requirement to participate in Track II.

Does previous or current participation in the FlexTech Program, Green and Clean Energy Solutions Program, or the Benchmarking Program preclude funding in this program?

NYSERDA will evaluate applications for potential overlap between programs. Discussion will be needed if the same work being requested again. For example, we would not fund benchmarking if a school is actively participating in the Benchmarking Program. Also, if you recently completed an energy study through the Green and Clean Energy Solutions Program, we would not fund an energy study through PON 4924 if the study included the same or like measures which were evaluated less than three (3) years ago.

Are heat pumps eligible?

Yes, ground source and air source heat pumps are eligible technologies to study under Track I or to implement under Track II.

If a school is adding load, such as A/C and using a system such as VRF, the energy costs will increase based on adding A/C to a previously non-A/C school. Would a project like this still be eligible based on adding VRF and removing portions of systems utilizing fossil fuel heat sources?

Yes, projects adding load in an energy efficient manner would be eligible. Schools should make sure the project is utilizing solutions which maximize energy efficiency and leveraging clean energy technologies where appropriate.

Are ongoing maintenance costs for new systems eligible?

O&M costs can be included as part of project costs in a Track II proposal. In addition, the analysis of O&M costs or the commissioning costs of a new system are eligible activities for Track I.

Application:

Does NYSERDA provide any services to assist with the application process for Track I or Track II?

NYSERDA staff are available to walk schools through the application process for Track I. Schools looking for support submitting a Track II application may leverage the grant writing services offered under Track I.

Does the school district need to identify a point of contact at the school to manage this program?

Yes, all applications require a school district contact.

Is there a due date for Track I?

Track I applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis dependent on resource availability until December 30, 2025 by 3:00 PM Eastern Time.

The Track II due date is July 27, 2022 by 3:00 pm Eastern Time. This seems like an aggressive due date to get projects approved through the New York State Education Department Facilities Planning Office. Is this possible?

Track II projects do not need to be approved by the New York State Education Department Facilities Planning Office in order to be eligible to submit a proposal to Track II.

Funding:

How much total funding is available?

There is a total of \$50M in incentives available through the Clean Green Schools Initiative. Specifically, there is \$15M available in Track I and \$35M available in Track II. In addition, there is \$5.5M available to support Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities.

How is the funding divided per building and per district for Track I?

If a school district spends less than \$500,000 annually on energy expenditures, the funding caps include:

- Building Cap - \$260,000
 - \$150,000 for all Track I services (excluding On-Site Energy Manager or Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities)
 - \$100,000 for On-Site Energy Manager
 - \$10,000 for Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities
- District Cap - \$450,000
 - \$300,000 for all Track I services (excluding On-Site Energy Manager or Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities)
 - \$100,000 for On-Site Energy Manager
 - \$50,000 for Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities

If a school district spends more than \$500,000 annually on energy expenditures, the funding caps include:

- Building Cap - \$360,000
 - \$150,000 for all Track I services (excluding On-Site Energy Manager or Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities)
 - \$200,000 for On-Site Energy Manager
 - \$10,000 for Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities
- District Cap - \$750,000
 - \$500,000 for all Track I services (excluding On-Site Energy Manager or Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities)
 - \$200,000 for On-Site Energy Manager
 - \$50,000 for Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Activities

Please see page 8 of the PON to review the funding associated with Track I.

Is there a local share associated with Track I?

There is no required local share. Track I project costs are up to 100% funded, up to the funding caps included in Table 1 of the PON (see page 8). If the project cost exceeds the caps, then a local share will be needed to cover the difference.

If a district has two buildings that want to participate in Track II, do they get the district maximum (\$6M)? Or they are eligible for the \$8M (building maximum \$4M for each of them)?

If a district has two buildings that want to participate in Track II, they will be subject to the \$6,100,000 district cap.

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.

Does NYSERDA funding need to be subtracted from a school districts Building Aid reimbursement?

No, NYSERDA funding will not impact the amount of Building Aid a school receives for a capital project. School districts can use the NYSERDA funding to cover the local share of the project costs. For Track II, applicant project costs are up to 100% funded, net of funding from investor-owned utilities, state aid (e.g. building aid), federal funding, or any other funding source

Track I:

How long will you pay for an On-site Energy Manager?

The engagement will be funded for up to 3 years, or until the one-time funding is exhausted.

Can the On-Site Energy Manager be part-time?

Yes, the On-Site Energy Manager engagement must be for a minimum of 12 months and be at least 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (20 hours per week).

Can school systems share an On-site Energy Manager?

Yes, an On-Site Energy Manager can be shared across different eligible districts.

Does the On-Site Energy Manager have to be an employee of the school or can it be a contracted position?

The On-Site Energy Manager services may be performed by a new permanent hire, contracted staff, or a hybrid arrangement of supplementing permanent staff with contracted staff.

For Track I, the Program only provides \$500 in funding for benchmarking. Is this because the schools are meant to leverage other funding sources like FlexTech for this?

The \$500 available for benchmarking is meant to cover three rounds of annual utility data collection. NYSERDA will provide baseline and annual benchmarking reports to the school. Please consult the Track I - Benchmarking Guidance Document which is located on the Clean Green Schools Initiative Document and Resources [website](#). Schools cannot apply for more than \$500 per building through our technical assistance programs for benchmarking.

Can solar be a standalone project under Track I?

No, an energy study may include an assessment of the feasibility of a solar installation project, but it must be paired with an evaluation of other energy efficiency measures. In addition, Track I supports the assessment of community solar and clean energy purchasing. See the Track I – Eligible Activities [document](#) for more information.

Is energy auditing, building retro-commissioning and decarbonization master planning eligible services under Track I?

Yes, all of those activities are eligible project types under Track I. Please review the Track I – Eligible Activities [document](#) for more information.

Are schools required to work with a FlexTech consultant? If the consultant is not a FlexTech consultant, would the consultant be required to submit two project examples?

Schools may utilize a third-party independent consultant of their choice to complete a Track I project. Dependent on project type, a firm may undergo additional review or need to provide relevant examples before being approved to perform certain services. For example, consultants not currently qualified under relevant NYSERDA or utility program lists, for example NYS Clean Heat Contractors GSHP designer lists, may be required to submit examples of two previous successful projects of similar scope as part of the Scope of Work. Please see page 8 and 9 of the PON to review the Consultant Requirements associated with Track I.

Does an engineering firm completing an energy study for Track I have to be a participating contractor for this program?

No, schools may utilize a third-party independent consultant of their choice to complete the energy study (e.g. FlexTech consultant or independent service provider).

If a school is in need of a consultant to perform work under Track I (e.g. energy efficiency or decarbonization studies), can NYSERDA provide a list of consultants to work with?

Schools in need of a consultant for engineering and architecture services may choose from NYSERDA's FlexTech Consultant [list](#). Schools in need of a fiscal advisor may also consider reaching out to the [Association of School Business Officials NY](#) for a list of fiscal advisors. Schools in need of a grant writer may also consider leveraging their [regional BOCES](#), provided grant writing services are available.

How many times can an energy firm apply to Track I?

NYSERDA reserves the right to limit the number of projects a consultant can have at any given time.

Are there template documents for Track I which describe the task breakdown for the Scope of Work?

Yes, there is a Track I – Scope of Work Template available on the Clean Green Schools Initiative Documents and Resources [website](#).

Track II:

What is the limit of proposal winners for Track II in the first round?

We anticipate awarding \$12M in the first round of Track II, but it will depend on the number of successful proposals received.

What is the expected interval of Track II rounds? Do you expect Track II offerings to be available for application in 2023?

The next round of Track II is expected in year 2023, but this will depend on whether or not the Environmental Bond Act is passed in November.

If the Environmental Bond Act is passed in November, we anticipate that public schools will have access to additional funding from the Environmental Bond Act for decarbonization projects. We will modify this program when and if that funding is available. It is anticipated that the Program would be modified to continue to provide only Track I projects (Track II projects will go through the agency managing the Environmental Bond Act funding).

If the Environmental Bond Act is not passed in November, we anticipate that we will coordinate two additional rounds of Track II funding (e.g. 2023 and 2024).

When will Track II grants be awarded?

We anticipate that schools who are selected to receive awards under Track II will be issued an award letter in September. After this point, the awarded projects will work with the NYSERDA Project Managers to negotiate the contracts. It can take six months to negotiate the contract, execute the contract and receive a purchase order.

What is the timeline that an awardee has to expend the funds on a Track II project?

Unless otherwise negotiated, all work funded under Track II must be completed and invoiced within five (5) years of contract execution. Extensions to this timeline must be submitted to NYSERDA for approval.

If a school district has already received NYSED approval for a capital project, would they still be eligible to apply to Track II?

To be eligible to apply to Track II, applicants must not have entered into a contract with a construction firm prior to applying.

Can a district apply for this program if they have already done an energy performance contract?

To be eligible to apply to Track II, applicants must not have entered into a contract with a construction firm prior to applying.

Can Track II participants also apply to other rebate programs (e.g., NYS Clean Heat program)?

Yes. We encourage schools to leverage other sources of funding for their projects. Applicant project costs are up to 100% funded, net of funding from investor-owned utilities, state aid, federal funding, or any other funding source. NYSERDA will not pay for more than 100% of the project costs.

Is the Track II funding limited to a percentage of the project construction cost or might it be funded 100% if below the stated caps?

Applicant project costs are up to 100% funded, net of funding from investor-owned utilities, state aid, federal funding, or any other funding source.

Will this program (Track II) fund an energy performance contract that is comprised of eligible activities?

Yes, schools working with an Energy Performance Contractor are eligible to apply for Track II funding.

Is solar PV an eligible measure for Track II? What about batteries?

Yes, solar PV and/or energy storage may be considered as part of a larger project, when completed in combination with any eligible primary activities (e.g. Clean Heating and Cooling Projects or Capital Projects to Move Towards Decarbonization). Please see page 11 of the PON to review the eligible activities associated with Track II.

Is upgrading existing electrical infrastructure to support an air source heat pump an eligible activity for Track II?

Yes, upgrading existing electrical infrastructure may be considered as part of a larger project, when completed in combination with any eligible primary activities (e.g. Clean Heating and Cooling Projects or Capital Projects to Move Towards Decarbonization). Please see page 11 of the PON to review the eligible activities associated with Track II.

Are energy storage and advanced control systems eligible services under Track II?

Yes, energy storage and advanced control systems may be considered as part of a larger project, when completed in combination with any eligible primary activities (e.g. Clean Heating and Cooling Projects or Capital Projects to Move Towards Decarbonization). Please see page 11 of the PON to review the eligible activities associated with Track II.

Conversion of distribution systems (e.g. steam to hot water) is an eligible project under Track II. How does it relate to decarbonization?

Conversion of distribution systems (e.g., steam to hot water) is considered an eligible Track II project type provided it supports a school's transition to potential future electrification (e.g. future installation of a ground source heat pump system).

With our urban campus, ground source heat pumps are a very expensive and a nearly impossible proposition. We don't have much land available without major disruptions. Are air source heat pumps going to be given the same weight as ground source heat pumps?

An air source heat pump is an eligible project type under Track II. Please review the Track II Evaluation Criteria (see pages 14-15) and Attachment D – Track II Proposal Template (Project Impact section) to better understand how the Track II proposals will be reviewed and evaluated. Applicants that either propose to install ground source heat pump or that propose to fully electrify both space and domestic hot water equipment with any of the Clean Heating and Cooling Technologies listed in the PON are eligible to receive an additional \$1,000,000 for their proposed project. See page 12 of the PON to review the funding associated with Track II.

Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Opportunities:

Do you facilitate any connections between participating districts and providers of clean energy educational opportunities?

There is a list of eligible Clean Energy Educational and Professional Development Existing Activities on our [website](#). If you are an entity that provides these services and want to be added to our website, please reach out to us to discuss this further (P12Schools@nyserda.ny.gov).

Additional Resources:

Are there marketing materials available to share with school Facility Managers (e.g. Fact Sheets)?

Yes, marketing material (e.g. Fact Sheets) will be on our website to download and distribute to entities.

Vendors/Contractors:

Is there a method for connecting vendors/contractors with eligible schools or schools requesting funding?

Not at this time. Please feel free to contact us directly to discuss further (P12Schools@nyserda.ny.gov).

Other:

What is the PON number for this solicitation?

The PON number for the Clean Green Schools Initiative is #4924.

Meeting both NYSERDA goals and the New York State Education Department requirements could be tricky. Is there a designated contact at the New York State Education Department to help a school's team navigate this?

NYSERDA is available to support schools in navigating program requirements and coordination with the State Education Department, as needed.

Does this PON build on an earlier PON for schools?

The Green and Clean Energy Solutions Program (PON 4157) offers cost-sharing for energy studies and design. The Clean Green Schools Initiative (PON 4924) offers a wider range of engineering services under Track I and funding for installation under Track II. The Green and Clean Energy Solutions Program (PON 4157) is available for schools who are not eligible for the Clean Green Schools Initiative (PON 4924).

The Green and Clean Energy Solutions Program is available to private schools which pay into the System Benefits Charge (SBC) on their electric utility bill. Is there a program available for private schools that do not pay into the System Benefits Charge (SBC) on their electric utility bill?

At this time, NYSERDA does not have a program available for non-SBC paying private schools. Please check with your local utility for potential offerings.

Will the NYSERDA Regional Clean Energy Hubs be trained in helping schools access these program funds in the coming years?

NYSERDA will coordinate with the Regional Clean Energy Hubs in the future.