

Community Energy Plan Grant Application Form

Background

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities has created a Community Energy Plan Grant program for municipalities to develop a community energy plan to meet the goals of the state's Energy Master Plan. [New Jersey's Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050](#) ("EMP") established that community-level action is necessary to achieve the state's goal of 100% clean energy by 2050.

The Community Energy Plan Grant ("CEPG") Program will help municipalities plan for and invest in energy resilience, renewable energy, and efficiency to work towards a better environment for all residents. By using the state's EMP as a guide, grantees will work to develop sustainable strategies that increase clean energy production, reduce energy use, and cut emissions. This grant will be available to all municipalities, with additional support and funds provided to municipalities that have been identified as containing overburdened census tracts and distressed municipalities, according to the [Environmental Justice Law, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157](#) and the [Department of Community Affairs Municipal Revitalization Index \(MRI\)](#) respectively ("Overburdened Municipalities").

Program Summary

Community Energy Planning is the process by which communities collaboratively select and strategically implement emissions-reducing initiatives that fulfill the EMP goals ("Process"). The Process includes assembling a planning team of local municipal staff, elected officials, relevant municipal board and commission members, and community volunteers. This planning team assesses the municipality's needs to find the opportunities for energy resiliency, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.

The core of the program development is the Community Energy Plan Workplan Template. The Template lays out clearly each step required for a municipality to create a Plan. The BPU Office of Clean Energy Equity, working with partner Sustainable Jersey, has identified a slate of practical and impactful energy strategies that municipalities can implement, and provides needed background data to complete a Plan more easily. This allows municipal grant recipients to focus their efforts on assessing the actions that will contribute to improving local energy performance and achieving statewide energy goals.

The Process should engage the entire community through two or more public meetings to determine the targeted initiatives, as well as a timeline for implementation. For example, a community might determine how many electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are publicly accessible and set a target for providing more EV charging stations in its community, or a community may wish to prioritize energy efficiency for local businesses and plan an outreach campaign to help businesses take advantage of state or utility energy efficiency incentives. Once the initiative and timeline for implementation have been determined, the planning team creates a Plan that establishes specific energy initiatives to pursue, identifies lead and partner entities for each initiative, and details a timeline of steps toward implementation.

Section A: Application Form Requirements, Instructions, Terms and Conditions

The following application form is intended only for municipalities submitting a Community Energy Plan Grant (“CEPG”) proposal for consideration by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“Board” or “BPU”). Projects selected by the Board will be approved for participation in the CEPG Program.

This application form is valid only for the following program year and application period:

Program Year 2

Application Period Opens: November 16, 2021

Period Closes: March 18, 2022

I. Minimum Qualification Requirements

The purpose of this application is for municipalities to create a Community Energy Plan that aligns local communities with the State’s Energy Master Plan, including any benchmarking and audit services that are needed. All municipalities that submit a completed application are eligible for a \$10,000 grant award. Municipalities identified as an overburdened municipality, as more fully described below, are eligible for a \$25,000 grant award.

The CEPG is open to projects that meet the following minimum requirements. The applicant must:

1. Be a municipality;
2. Review and select the list of high-impact strategies listed in Appendix D:
 - a. Select each strategy that the municipality is interested in exploring more in-depth
 - b. Space is provided to add specific initiatives that are not already included on the list;
3. Provide a preliminary project budget;
4. Submit a signed and dated municipal resolution documenting the governing body’s approval of the application and commitment to implement the required community energy plan process with the completed application form. See Appendix F for a sample resolution; and
5. Not have been awarded a Community Energy Plan Grant previously.

Overburdened Municipalities have been identified based on the below criteria:

1. The municipality has over 50% of its population living in an Overburdened Community (OBC) Census Block as defined by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to New Jersey’s Environmental Justice Law, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157; and
2. The municipality meets one or both of the following criteria (either A or B):
 - a) Over 35% of the population is living under 200% of the poverty level according to U.S. Census 2019 ACS data; or

- b) The municipality is categorized as "distressed" according to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs ("DCA") based on their score using the DCA's Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI) score (a 50 or higher).

II. Instructions for Completing the Community Energy Plan Grant Application Form

1. Each municipality applying to participate in the CEPG Program must complete and submit the individual application form in full.
2. Complete sections B and C, and Appendix B, D, E, & F in full. All questions are required to be answered. All attachments are required. All attachments must be affixed to the end of the application form to be considered a complete application package.
3. Original wet signatures on all forms and certifications of this application form are required. The certifications contained in section C must be notarized.

III. Terms and Conditions

General Terms and Conditions

1. The "Applicant" is defined as the municipality that submits the CEPG application form.
2. All applications must be in compliance with all local, state and federal rules, regulations and laws.
3. By submitting an application, the Applicant acknowledges on behalf of all project participants that the information included in the application is subject to disclosure under the Open Public Records Act, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. Aggregated information may be used by the Board and/or other state, federal, county, regional or local agencies in reports and evaluations, and the geographic location may be used to update Geographic Information System ("GIS") mapping. Furthermore, the Applicant understands that the list of approved CEPG projects will be published on the Board's website.
4. Amendments or supplements to the CEPG application form will be made available via the New Jersey Clean Energy Program ("NJCEP") website at www.njcleanenergy.com. This application form may be modified for future application periods at any time without prior notification.
5. Only applications that are deemed administratively complete by the close of the application period will be considered for participation in the CEPG Program during that program year. An application will be deemed administratively complete if: 1) all questions are answered; 2) all required attachments are included; and 3) all required signatures are included. Applicants will be notified if an application is deemed administratively incomplete and, thus, not eligible for consideration for that program year. Applicants with administratively incomplete applications may submit a new completed application for consideration in the next open period without advantage or disadvantage.
6. The Applicant may be required to supplement the information provided in the application form upon request from the Board or Board Staff.

Evaluation of Applications and Approval of Projects

1. Following the close of the application period, each application will be reviewed and evaluated by an evaluation committee.
2. Applications will be evaluated for completeness in order to be considered for participation in the CEPG Program. Municipalities must complete the Community Energy Plan Application Checklist provided in Appendix D, provide a preliminary project budget, and conduct a minimum of one public meeting to engage the community in the application for the CEPG.
3. Board Staff may reject at the close of the application period applications that are incomplete or that do not meet a minimum standard for selection, as set forth in this application form.

Milestones and Follow-Up for Approved Projects

1. Should the proposed Community Energy Plan Grant project be approved by the Board for participation in the CEPG Program, such approval will be conditioned on the project being performed as proposed in the application. By accepting the grant, applicant agrees to complete the following scope of work:
 - i. Starting with the strategies identified in the application, the municipality must work to conduct an in-depth analysis of all of the strategies in the Workplan Template provided in Appendix H, and determine which strategies will be incorporated into its Plan;
 - ii. Conduct a minimum of one additional public meeting to engage the community in the creation of the Plan;
 - iii. Finalize the Plan through formal adoption by the municipal governing body and submission of a copy of the completed Plan to the Board.
2. If the grantee would like to change the budget proposed in the application, the grantee will submit a formal change request outlining the original strategy, the change requested, and the explanation for the change.
3. At the end of the eighteen (18) month grant term, the grantee will be required to submit a copy of the Plan to the BPU. The grantee will also be required to submit a copy of an approved resolution adopting the plan.
4. Reporting requirements for the grant are dependent on the amount awarded:
 - i. Recipients of the \$10,000 grant are to submit one expenditure report at the end of the eighteen (18) month grant term; and
 - ii. Recipients of the \$25,000 grant are to submit both quarterly reports and a final report at the end of the eighteen (18) month grant term.

Submitting an Application

Completed applications must be emailed to: community.energy@bpu.state.nj.us no later than 5:00 P.M. on the date of the close of the application period in order to be considered.

Use of Funds

Funds may be used for any purpose related to the creation of the Plan and related strategies. This includes staff salaries, overhead, consultants/contractors, supplies, and other direct expenses.

If at the completion of the Plan there are funds remaining, these funds must be returned. The grantee has 60 days from the end of the grant term to submit a final expenditure and programmatic report. Unused funds would be returned within, but no later than, these 60 days.

Use of Contractors

The prime applicant must obtain written authorization for contractors who will be conducting work on the project. The contractor must authorize in writing the participation of the contractor on the proposed project and this authorization should be submitted with the application. The written authorization must also contain a determination that the use of a contractor is consistent with the contractor's authority under its award. Please note that failure to provide this authorization may result in rejection of an application prior to merit review. The following wording is acceptable for the authorization:

“Authorization is granted for _____ to participate in the proposed project. The work proposed for the project is consistent with or complementary to the missions of _____, who is authorized to perform the work proposed in the application submitted under the Clean Energy Planning Grant by the following statutory authority (insert statute name, citation, and section)”

If a contractor is not identified at the time the application is submitted, but the prime applicant intends to hire a contractor as a part of the project, the prime applicant must include a budget line item for the contractor. Once the grant is awarded and the applicant identifies the contractor, the applicant must provide written justification for using grant funds for the proposed contractor as well as a copy of the contractor agreement with the proposed contractor. If use of a contractor is not included as a line item in the original budget included with the application, but the prime applicant would like to use a contractor, the applicant must submit a budget modification if the contractor amount is more than 10% of the total grant award amount.

If an RFP process is needed to obtain a contractor, please provide the timeline for the RFP process.

Letter of Support

A letter of support is required for any partners that will be working on the project that are not listed as an applicant.

Questions and Further Information

All questions pertaining to the application form should be directed to:
community.energy@bpu.state.nj.us

Section B: Community Energy Plan Project Description

Instructions: Section B must be completed in its entirety. Attachments should be placed at the end of the Application package.

I. Applicant Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Municipality: _____ County: _____ Zip Code: _____

Primary Point of Contact:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Fiscal Point of Contact:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Vendor ID #: _____

II. Clean Energy Program Participation History

Has this municipality applied for or participated in any Clean Energy Programs in the past? If yes, please identify the programs. If not, please write "None".

III. Preliminary Project Budget

Please provide as a separate attachment, a preliminary project budget including planned expenditures related to energy audits, consultants, meeting space, etc. A template is provided in Appendix E.

Section C: Certification

Instructions: Original wet signatures on all certifications are required.

I. Applicant Certification

The undersigned warrants, certifies, and represents that:

I, _____ am _____ of the Applicant _____ (name) and have been duly authorized to file this Applicant Certification on behalf of my organization/government entity; and

I, hereby warrant and certify, that the information provided in this application package has been personally examined by me, is true, accurate, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge based on information personally known to me or upon reasonable inquiry of individuals with such knowledge; and

I, on behalf of the government entity/organization named herein, acknowledge that certain information in this application is subject to disclosure under the Open Public Records Act, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq., and that confidential sensitive and trade secret information should be submitted in accordance with the confidentiality procedures set forth in N.J.A.C. 14:1-12.3; and

I, on behalf of the government entity/organization named herein, acknowledge that **submission of false information may be grounds for denial of this application, and if any of the foregoing statements are willfully false, am subject to punishment to the full extent of the law, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment.**

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Municipality: _____

Appendix A: Overburdened Municipalities

Municipality	County	Municipality	County
Asbury Park City	Monmouth	Millville City	Cumberland
Atlantic City	Atlantic	New Brunswick City	Middlesex
Bridgeton City	Cumberland	Newark City	Essex
Buena Boro	Atlantic	North Wildwood City	Cape May
Camden City	Camden	Passaic City	Passaic
Cape May Point Boro	Cape May	Paterson City	Passaic
Chesilhurst Boro	Camden	Paulsboro Boro	Gloucester
City of Orange Twp	Essex	Penns Grove Boro	Salem
Clementon Boro	Camden	Perth Amboy City	Middlesex
Commercial Twp	Cumberland	Phillipsburg Town	Warren
East Newark Boro	Hudson	Plainfield City	Union
East Orange City	Essex	Pleasantville City	Atlantic
Egg Harbor City	Atlantic	Prospect Park Boro	Passaic
Elizabeth City	Union	Salem City	Salem
Fairfield Twp	Cumberland	Seaside Heights Boro	Ocean
Flemington Boro	Hunterdon	Trenton City	Mercer
Freehold Boro	Monmouth	Union City	Hudson
Harrison Town	Hudson	Victory Gardens Boro	Morris
Hi-nella Boro	Camden	Vineland City	Cumberland
Irvington Twp	Essex	West New York Town	Hudson
Lakewood Twp	Ocean	Wildwood City	Cape May
Lindenwold Boro	Camden	Woodbine Boro	Cape May
Long Branch City	Monmouth	Woodlynne Boro	Camden
Maurice River Twp	Cumberland	Wrightstown Boro	Burlington

Appendix B: Required Attachments Checklist

Note: Additional attachments not reflected here may be required and are identified throughout this application form.

Required Attachments for all Applications	Attached?
Completed Community Energy Plan Application Checklist (Appendix D)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Preliminary Project Budget (Appendix E)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Proof of Public Meeting and Municipal Resolution in support of grant application (Appendix F)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Appendix C: Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated for completeness in order to be considered for participation in the CEPG Program. Municipalities must complete the Community Energy Plan Application Checklist, provide a preliminary project budget, and conduct a minimum of one public meeting to engage the community in the application for the Plan.

Overburdened Municipalities have been identified based on the below criteria:

1. The municipality has over 50% of its population living in an Overburdened Community (OBC) Census Block as defined by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to New Jersey's Environmental Justice Law, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157; and
2. The municipality meets one or both of the following criteria (either A or B):
 - i. Over 35% of the population is living under 200% of the poverty level according to U.S. Census 2019 ACS data; or
 - ii. The municipality is categorized as "distressed" according to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs ("DCA") based on their score using the DCA's Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI) score (a 50 or higher).

Appendix D: Community Energy Plan Application Checklist

See attachment

Appendix E: Preliminary Budget

Budget for Community Energy Plan Grant

Item Number	Description	Estimated Cost	Notes
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
	Total		

Appendix F: Municipal Support of Application

See attachment.

Appendix G: Sustainable Jersey Guide for Sustainable Energy Communities

Click [here](#) for attachment.

Appendix H: Community Energy Plan Workplan Template

Click [here](#) for attachment. This is to be used in the creation of the Plan.

Community Energy Plan Application Checklist

Community Energy Plan Initiatives	Mark if interested
Strategy 1: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Transportation Sector	
1.1 Adopt Supportive Zoning and Regulations for EV Charging Infrastructure Pass NJDCA's model ordinance specifying EV charging infrastructure as a permitted accessory use	
1.2 Train First Responders on EVs and EV Charging Infrastructure Require training on EVs and EV charging infrastructure for local first responders	
1.3 Train Non-Emergency Staff on EVs and EV Charging Infrastructure Initiate training on EVs and EV charging infrastructure for municipal code officials, etc.	
1.4 Purchase Alternative Fuel Vehicles Strategically replace gasoline/diesel municipal vehicles with EVs or other alternative fuel vehicles	
1.5 Improve Municipal Fleet Efficiency Replace older municipal vehicles with more efficient versions, downsize fleet, improve driver efficiency	
1.6 Install Public EV Charging Infrastructure Install public EV charging infrastructure with appropriate signage and safety/accessibility features	
1.7 Encourage Non-Municipal Fleets to Improve Efficiency Encourage fleet operators to improve fleet efficiency via electrification, downsizing, driver training	
1.8 Encourage Workplace EV Charging Infrastructure Encourage local businesses to install EV charging infrastructure; offer incentive such as "ribbon cutting"	
Other:	
Strategy 2: Accelerate Deployment of Renewable Energy and Distributed Energy Resources	
2.1 Adopt Supportive Zoning and Permitting for Private Solar Provide reasonable permitting standards and procedure for solar developers	
2.2 Post Solar Permitting Checklist Provide permitting checklist for solar developers on municipal website	
2.3 Adopt Zoning and Permitting for Community Solar Allow large-scale solar in some zoning districts; help community solar developers with permitting	
2.4 Train First Responders on Solar Require training on solar for local first responders	
2.5 Train Non-Emergency Staff on Solar Initiate training on solar for non-emergency municipal staff such as inspectors	
2.6 Install On-site Municipal Renewable Generation Host solar, wind, or geothermal project on municipal property	
2.7 Buy Renewable Electricity for Municipal Facilities Sign contract with third-party supplier to supply municipal facilities with renewable electricity	
2.8 Offer a Solar Employee Benefit Program Offer solar installation discount to municipal employees	
2.9 Institute a Community-wide Solar Purchasing Program Offer and promote solar installation discount to residents and/or businesses	
2.10 Implement Renewable Government Energy Aggregation (R-GEA) Procure third-party electricity supply for residents with high renewable content	
2.11 Support Community Solar as Project Ambassador Connect community solar developers with community stakeholders	
2.12 Support Community Solar as Outreach Coordinator Educate the community about community solar	
2.13 Host a Community Solar Project on Municipal Property Lease municipal rooftop, parking lot, landfill, etc. for installation of community solar project	
Other:	

Strategy 3: Maximize Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Reduce Peak Demand	
3.1 Upgrade Energy Efficiency in Municipal Facilities Upgrade existing municipal facilities to be more energy efficient utilizing utility/NJCEP incentives	
3.2 Residential Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign Host workshop, send letter to residents to learn about energy efficiency opportunities	
3.3 Commercial Energy Efficiency Outreach Campaign Host workshop, send letter to businesses to learn about energy efficiency opportunities	
3.4 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Large Energy Users Encourage large energy users in the community to improve energy efficiency in their facilities	
Other:	
Strategy 4: Reduce Energy Consumption and Emissions from the Building Sector	
4.1 Construct New Municipal Buildings as Model Green Buildings Encourage/require green building practices during construction of new municipal facilities	
4.2 Encourage Benchmarking and Commissioning for Existing Buildings Encourage large building owners to track energy usage, improve efficiency of current equipment	
4.3 Require Developers to Complete Green Development Checklist Require developers to submit completed Green Development Checklist with Site Plan Application	
4.4 Conduct Outreach Targeting New Construction in the Community Encourage developers to utilize NJCEP's New Construction Energy Efficiency incentive programs	
Other:	
Strategy 6: Support Community Energy Planning and Action with Emphasis on Encouraging and Supporting Participation by Low- and Moderate-Income/EJ Communities	
6.1 Make Community Energy Planning Inclusive Ensure LMI residents are represented in energy planning processes	
6.2 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Low- and Moderate-Income Residents Offer education/outreach to encourage LMI residents to utilize energy efficiency programs	
6.3 Support Shared Mobility Programs Promote shared transportation networks that benefit LMI residents	
6.4 Support Low- and Moderate-Income Community Solar Subscriptions Ensure that local community solar projects reserve capacity for LMI residents	
6.5 Conduct Energy Efficiency Outreach to Community-Serving Institutions Encourage community-serving institutions to utilize state and utility energy efficiency programs	
Other:	
Strategy 7: Expand the Clean Energy Innovation Economy	
7.1 Adopt Energy Storage Policies Adopt standards for permitting battery energy storage systems	
7.2 Install an Energy Storage Project Install energy storage at municipal facilities; showcase project to the public	
7.3 Develop Local Microgrid	
7.4 Develop/Participate in a District Energy System	
Other:	

**Resolution of Support from Local Governing Body Authorizing an
Application to the NJCEP Community Energy Planning Grants Program**

The purpose of this resolution is to affirm that the governing body approves of the municipality's application for a Community Energy Planning Grant from New Jersey's Clean Energy Program. A signed and certified resolution must be submitted with the application via email. This is not required language; any standard resolution in support of the application will suffice.

The sample resolution is below.

[Municipality]

RESOLUTION # _____

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION TO THE
NJ CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM COMMUNITY ENERGY PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, a sustainable community seeks to ensure that its environmental, economic and social objectives are balanced and mutually supportive; and

WHEREAS, [Municipality] strives to assure clean land, air and water for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey’s Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050 (“EMP”) established that community-level action is necessary to achieve the state’s goal of 100% clean energy by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities has created a Community Energy Plan Grant program for municipalities to develop a community energy plan to meet the goals of the state’s Energy Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, [Municipality] is invested in developing a community energy plan to help the state achieve the goal of 100% clean energy by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Community Energy Plan Grant program will help [Municipality] to plan for and invest in renewable energy and to work towards a better environment for all residents by using the state’s Energy Master Plan (EMP) as a guide to develop sustainable strategies that increase clean energy production, reduce energy use, and cut emissions.

THEREFORE, the [Municipality’s Governing Body] of [Municipality] has determined that [Municipality] should apply for the aforementioned Community Energy Plan Grant program; and

THEREFORE, [Municipality] will commit to providing staff support for the duration of the Community Energy Planning process, including for gathering of relevant data and for convening at least two public meetings.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that [Municipality’s Governing Body] of the [Municipality], State of New Jersey, authorizes the submission of the aforementioned application to the NJBPU Community Energy Plan Grant program.

Signature

Approved Date