****2015 Kathleen A.P. Mathias Agriculture Energy Efficiency Grant Program**

**Program Overview**

MEA continues to support energy projects to showcase in the agriculture sector. Through the 2015 Kathleen A. P. Mathias Agriculture Energy Efficiency Program (Mathias Ag program), MEA plans to distribute grants ranging from $15,000 to $60,000 for agriculturally-focused energy efficiency projects and MEA will pay up to 50% of eligible costs for selected projects. In fiscal year 2015, MEA is also looking to expand the program to now include agricultural projects that incorporate both energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, in order to identify best practices for case studies within the agriculture sector.

Subject to funding availability, MEA will award up to $550,000 in grants in fiscal year 2015 and anticipates granting 8-16 awards for this program. Of the $550,000 program budget, approximately $300,000 is allocated for energy efficiency measures and approximately $250,000 is allocated for renewable energy measures.

**Project Requirements and Restrictions**

* The energy measures must be installed by November 1, 2015.
* Final invoices must be submitted to MEA by December 1, 2015.
* All completed retrofits must improve energy efficiency OR combine energy efficiency and renewable energy to achieve significant energy savings for the treated/upgraded space – whether it is the whole building, particular units, or common areas (see Application Information Q&A and Selection Criteria below).
	+ If you have done either very minimal upgrades or none at all for your treated/upgraded space, you can propose a project that meets the program requirements using either energy efficiency measures, or both renewable energy and energy efficiency measures combined.
* Successful applicants selected for award must cover at least 50% of the net project cost after all grants and incentives from other sources have been applied.
* Projects selected for funding under the Mathias Ag Program are not eligible for additional renewable energy incentives from MEA.
* All projects must be installed and operated in compliance with the requirements of local and county codes, as well as with applicable requirements of the National Electrical Code (NEC).
* Any solar photovoltaic (PV ) system hardware must be in compliance with all applicable performance and safety standards including: Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 1741, Standard for Static Inverters and Charge Controllers for Use in Photovoltaic Systems and UL 1703, and Standard for Safety: Flat-Plate Photovoltaic Modules and Panel. In addition, each system must be installed in a manner that is compliant with the *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers* (*IEEE) Standard 929-2000, Recommended Practice for Utility Interface of Photovoltaic Systems*.
* All renewable energy projects must be installed in a manner that is compliant with the net metering regulations outlined in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 20.50.10 et seq., as well as the requirements of the local electric utility and Authority Having Jurisdiction.
* Prior to the start of construction, all selected projects must be reviewed by the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) or the qualified historical preservation expert on MEA’s staff to ensure that no historical property will be adversely impacted. Grantee may be asked by MEA for additional information concerning the proposed project site, in order to enable the historic preservation review.
* Only net metered solar PV projects will be considered for this opportunity.
* Projects on contiguous parcels of property will be considered one project.

**Who Can Apply?**

Farms and businesses in the agriculture sector may apply. Examples include dairy, orchard, poultry/egg, greenhouse, vegetable, animal, vineyard, grain dryer, processor, sawmill, and aquaculture. If you are uncertain about your eligibility, contact the MEA program manager, Dean Fisher, or call EnSave, a subcontractor working with MEA to provide program technical assistance, at (800) 732-1399 for guidance on the eligibility requirements.

**How to Apply**

Applications will be accepted until January 30, 2015.

* [**2015 Mathias Agriculture Energy Efficiency Program Application**](http://energy.maryland.gov/Business/MathiasAg14.htm)
* **2015 Mathias Agriculture Energy Efficiency Program Q&A**
* Electronic applications must be emailed by 11:59 p.m. January 30, 2015 to: MathiasAgProgram@sra.com.
* Applicant must complete all questions on the application in accordance with the instructions.
* Applicant must adhere to the compliance requirements referenced in the Application Instructions.
* Applicant must be approved to do business and be in good standing in the State of Maryland. For Certificate of Status information please see the [Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation](http://dat.state.md.us/) webpage.

**Selection Criteria**

These factors will be weighed in the selection of projects eligible for grant funding:

* **Project feasibility** – *Can the project be completed in the available construction window (by November 1, 2015)?*
* **Cost effectiveness** – *Will the energy improvements, in aggregate, pay for themselves within the expected lifetime of the equipment? Does the project provide significant energy savings (and generation if applicable) compared to the cost of the project? What is the energy savings (and generation if applicable) per MEA dollars spent on the project?*
* **Deep retrofit approach** – *Does the project include multiple energy efficiency measures? If it is a renewable project, are energy efficiency projects included in the application?*
* **Energy benefits** – *What are the likely energy benefits (kWh reduced, kWh generated, etc.) from the proposed measures? Do the anticipated energy benefits represent a significant percentage of the energy used within the building?*
* **Simple payback** – *How many years will it take to recover the cost of the investment without incentives from MEA or other sources? (Project cost divided by annual energy savings in dollars. For example, a project saving 400,000 kWh per year at $0.10 per kWh and a $50,000 project cost has a simple payback of 1.25 years: $50,000/$40,000=1.25)*
* **Percent of total energy saved within each building** – *Priority will be given to projects that reduce electricity use via efficiency gains or through a combination of efficiency and renewable energy. Projects saving a higher percentage of their energy use will also be evaluated more favorably. Because the program’s focus is electricity reduction, proposals that add load to the grid will be given the least consideration.*
* **Amount of matching (leveraged) funds** – *Is the applicant tapping additional non-MEA funding sources to maximize the value of this grant?*
* **Accuracy of energy savings and cost information for the project** – *Are the assumptions behind the numbers clearly stated to enable the Mathias Ag Program team to evaluate the project (i.e., detailed bids, equipment make and model numbers, efficiency ratings, operational schedules)?*
* **Best practices/showcase project** – *MEA is looking for projects that demonstrate energy efficiency and renewable energy best practices in order to expand both energy efficiency and renewable energy in the agriculture sector—and show other farm-related businesses what can be done. MEA is interested in projects that showcase the following types of energy measures:*
* Whole building weatherization
* Efficient lighting
* Motor efficiency upgrades
	+ Wind (consider capacity factor)
* Biomass (location and access to wood/fuel)
* Solar PV (factoring in orientation, location, and siting—i .e., not on usable farmland)
* Methane digester (is the fuel on site? How much can it burn?)

MEA also reserves the right to select applications that allow for a broad diversity in the project portfolio. Factors such as measure type, geographic region and agricultural market will be considered.

**Program Timeline**

The following are key dates in the program timeline:

* **December 2014**: The program opens for applications.
* **January 30, 2015**: The application period closes.
* **March 2015**: MEA anticipates announcing grant decisions.
* **April 2015**: MEA anticipates grant agreements are signed and executed.
* **November 1, 2015**: All energy efficiency measures are installed.
* **December 1, 2015**: Final invoices due to MEA.

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