Maryland Energy Administration

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Paul G. Pinsky, Director

Funding Opportunity Announcement
Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Program
FY 2026 Grant Program

Program Description
The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) proudly presents the FY2026 Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Program, aimed at Maryland's Institutions of Higher Education (i.e., accredited two and four year colleges and universities). This **competitive - statewide program** is designed to foster a holistic approach to sustainability by supporting the adoption of on-site renewable energy technologies, the integration of strategic energy planning into operations and academic curricula, and the advancement of workforce development in the renewable energy sector.

The FY26 Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Program's focus will support the installation of solar system(s) on higher education institutions that complement strategic energy planning, sustainable curricula, and workforce development. The program seeks to create sustainable, energy-efficient institutions that serve as practical learning environments and hubs for renewable energy education and job creation. Activities awarded under this program should not only contribute to the institution's sustainability goals but also ensure that students are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the sustainability and renewable energy sectors.

Type of Grant Program: **Competitive - statewide**

Application Deadline: **3:00 P.M. EDT, November 14, 2025**

Anticipated Funding
A total of **$8,000,000** is anticipated to be available from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund ("SEIF"). The amount awarded may be more or less, depending on the quantity and quality of applications received. Applicants may submit one or more applications. The maximum requested funding for the solar installation activity within each application is capped at $1 million. The maximum requested funding is $145,000 for campus clean energy master planning, $145,000 for clean energy sector course development, and $25,000 for student internships.

Eligible Applicants:
Funding is available to Maryland's Institutions of Higher Education, who are accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education.

Period of Performance
Expected period of performance: Thirty-six to thirty-nine (36-39) months, beginning with the effective date of the executed grant agreement.

Eligible Activities

Applicants may request funding for multiple eligible activities within a single application, including multiple solar installations, provided the combined funding request for all solar installations does not exceed the $1 million cap per application. In addition, applicants may request additional funding in their first application for the Campus Clean Energy Master Plan (up to $145,000, mandatory for first-time applicants), the Clean Energy Sector Course Development (up to $145,000), and student intern support (up to $25,000 total, with a cap of $5,000 per intern). These additional eligible activities are only permitted within the first application submitted by each applicant in this funding cycle.

Applicants are also permitted to submit separate applications for additional awards for one eligible activity only – Solar Installation. Each additional application is subject to the same $1 million cap for the solar installation activity.

The review and ranking process will prioritize awarding one grant per eligible applicant. Additional awards may be made to applicants only if there is remaining budget after the initial awards.

Solar Installation(s)

Applicants may include multiple solar installation sites within a single application, with the total funding request for all solar installations combined not exceeding $1 Million per application. Funding may be used for the installation(s) of roof-mounted solar, ground-mounted solar, or solar canopies over existing parking lots, parking garages, or other permanent impervious areas (e.g. athletic courts) at a facility owned or controlled by the applicant.

a. Solar system(s) purchased by applicant: For the installation of a solar system(s) purchased/owned by the applicant, up to $2,500/kW of grant funds are available with a cap of $1,000,000 per application. On a case-by-case basis, MEA may consider increasing the grant to $3,000/kW with the cap remaining at $1,000,000 per application when unique circumstances or a compelling reason is specified in the application.
    i. To be eligible, applicants must leverage funds from available federal incentive programs (or provide a compelling reason to waive this requirement)
    ii. Leveraging funding from state and local programs will also make an application more competitive
b. 3rd Party-Owned solar system(s): For the installation of a 3rd party-owned solar system(s), up to $600/kW of grant funds are available, with a cap of $1,000,000 per application.
    i. To be eligible, the solar system(s) must be net metered
    ii. To be eligible, the 3rd party owner must leverage funds from available federal incentive programs

Campus Clean Energy Master Plan

For first-time grantees for this grant program, in addition to the solar installation(s), applicants must develop a comprehensive Campus Clean Energy Master Plan (“CCEMP”). This plan should identify clear targets for the institution, aligned with Maryland’s clean energy goals, and outline strategies and options available to achieve these targets. Funding to support the initial CCEMP is anticipated to be up to $145,000 per eligible applicant.

- Note: Applicants who were awarded funding under the FY2025 Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Program are ineligible to receive funding for CCEMP activity under the FY2026 funding cycle.
- Note: First-time applicants submitting multiple applications in this funding cycle (FY2026) are only eligible to apply for the CCEMP in their first application.

a. The scope of this initiative encompasses comprehensive sustainability and workforce development, including, but not limited to, deploying renewable energy systems and related enhancements. The final product should include a detailed plan that identifies specific, actionable opportunities for renewable and cleaner energy generation, including:
    i. Identify locations on campus conducive for solar installations and other renewable energy opportunities
    ii. Identify opportunities for third-party ownership, for example power purchase agreements (PPAs), that can be used to access distributed energy resources such as solar systems
    iii. Identify alternative sources of financing, including federal, state, and local incentives including bonds and leases supported by energy savings
    iv. Identify opportunities for Energy as a Service (EaaS) agreements
    v. Develop plans and procurement options to solicit PPAs
    vi. Identify ways to increase energy efficiency in building envelopes during renovation and roof projects
    vii. Make recommendations for consideration of energy efficient equipment in heating, ventilation and air-conditioning replacement projects
    viii. Develop policies for evaluating energy efficiency during the planning phases of systemic renovation projects
    ix. Develop design standards for incorporating energy efficiency into systemic renovation projects
b. CCEMPs should focus on integrating renewable energy installations with strategic planning and analysis, aimed at not only reducing the applicant's carbon footprint but also fostering a skilled workforce in the clean energy sector.
    i. CCEMPs should identify impactful opportunities that synergize with existing campus sustainability plans, expand clean energy installations beyond the Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Program award, and contribute to the state's broader clean energy objectives, with a focus on equitable distribution and effective utilization.
c. Collaborative efforts with industry partners for practical training, alongside meticulous energy consumption and economic analyses, are encouraged to ensure the feasibility and success of these initiatives.

Clean Energy Sector Course Development Bonus
An applicant may also apply for additional funding under the Clean Energy Sector Course Development Bonus. This optional activity offers up to $145,000 per eligible applicant for the development of courses that build a workforce capable of designing, developing, and installing solar systems, including energy storage associated with the installation.

The applicant must commit to offering the course to students within two years of course approval to be eligible for funding.

- Note: Applicants who received funding for course development in the previous funding

cycle (FY2025) are not eligible to apply for this activity in this funding cycle (FY2026).
- Note: Applicants submitting multiple applications for this funding cycle (FY2026) are only eligible for the Clean Energy Sector Course Development funding in their first application.

The scope of this initiative encompasses:

a. Comprehensive sustainability and workforce development through the integration of renewable energy and sustainability into the curriculum.
b. Educational Program Development that is designed to expand and enhance efforts to develop a clean energy ready workforce including but not limited to:
    i. Creating a course program (i.e. major, minor, or certificate) for clean energy sector education and training that meet the following characteristics:
        1. Courses designed to prepare students for NABCEP Associate and various NABCEP certifications
        2. Courses designed to support students in a renewable energy related apprenticeship programs
        3. Courses designed to support bachelor and graduate level engineering students (e.g. electrical engineering, systems engineering, or similar) develop skills to design solar systems, inverters, charge controllers, microgrid controllers,etc.
        4. Courses designed to prepare students to become solar installers, wind technicians and/or geothermal technicians
        5. Courses designed to prepare students to become solar system designers (residential, commercial, utility scale)
    ii. Course creation for renewable energy design and installation
    iii. Integration of energy storage systems in curriculum

Student Internship Bonus

A bonus of up to $5,000 per student intern can also be applied to support student intern(s) assisting in the completion of either the CCEMP or Clean Energy Sector Course Development. Each applicant may apply for up to $25,000 total, to support a maximum of 5 interns.

- Note: Applicants submitting multiple applications for this funding cycle are only eligible for the student internship funding in their first application.

a. Student intern(s) are required to provide a final report on the tasks they completed relevant to the CCEMP or Clean Energy Sector Course Development, which should be submitted as part of the final grant report.
b. Student intern(s) must be managed by a staff or faculty member employed by the applicant. The designated supervisor will be responsible for coordinating directly with and ensuring the student intern(s) is effectively supporting the CCEMP or Clean Energy Sector Course Development.

<u>Ineligible Activities</u>

a. Activities ineligible for funding include:
    i. Commissioning reports
    ii. Energy audits
    iii. Activities lacking a clear link to greenhouse gas emission reductions
    iv. Academic research
    v. Travel to conferences

vi. Supplanting existing professional staffing (*funding CAN be used for new positions created with grant funds)
vii. Activities already completed by the applicant

b. While an applicant may apply to multiple MEA grant programs (e.g. this program, MEA's Commercial Solar Grant Program, and MEA's Resilient Maryland Program), MEA will only issue one grant for an individual solar installation.

Minimum Application Requirements

A checklist of required documents, as described below, can be found appended to this FOA in "Attachment A: Documents Checklist".

a. Letter authorizing the submission of an application signed by an officer with the authority to commit the applicant to execute the grant's requirements (e.g. President, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Sustainability Officer, etc.). This individual should have sufficient authority to identify, authorize, and provide the necessary resources to perform the following activities:
   i. A system diagram detailing locations, dimensions, and orientations of the proposed system on the property
   ii. A site map exhibiting the location of the system on the property
   iii. A prospective schedule and plan for campus design and construction of the solar system(s)
   iv. Output(s) from a Solar Energy Calculator (i.e. National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) PVWatts Calculator, or PVsyst's Photovoltaic Software, or equivalent) document showing expected energy production
   v. A basic electrical schematic of the facility's electrical system (a one-line diagram is acceptable) and where/how the solar system(s) connects to it
   vi. A cost savings analysis for the solar system(s): For a purchased system, calculate and provide the simple payback period; For a 3rd party-owned system, show the cost savings to the site owner over a 25-year period
   vii. Develop institutional master plans
   viii. Create and implement new programs of study, courses, and certifications
   ix. A brief page narrative describing the anticipated scope of work and how this will complement existing applicant's facilities, utilities, sustainability and/or climate action plan
b. A signed IRS Form W-9
c. A prospective schedule and plan for campus design and construction of the solar system(s)
d. For first time grantees of this program: A prospective schedule and plan for the CCEMP
e. For first time grantees of this program: A brief narrative (no more than two pages) describing how the CCEMP will identify specific and actionable opportunities for renewable energy generation and energy efficiency to reduce the applicant's carbon footprint
f. A budget showing full costs and requested funding from MEA. All non-capital costs that may be incurred must be submitted individually with a description of proposed use of the funding request
   i. Applicants should demonstrate the leveraging of federal, state, and local funding

programs

ii. Applicants that do not leverage additional federal, state, or local funding sources, must provide a compelling reason to waive this requirement or they will not be eligible to receive an award from this program.

g. Identification of a staff person who will be responsible for overseeing the continuation of the activities outlined in this grant announcement after the end of the award's period of performance

h. Competitive Procurement Requirements

i. Competitive Procurement Required: If a competitive procurement process is required, the applicant must provide documentation showing that it understands the current pricing for a solar system, or, if a PPA is contemplated, provide documentation demonstrating that a satisfactory PPA rate may be negotiated or achieved. If a PPA is contemplated, a copy of a signed contract or Letter of Intent (LOI) between the site owner and system owner.

ii. Non-Competitive Procurement Required: If a competitive procurement process is not required, provide a LOI between the applicant and the installer (for a purchased system) or a LOI between the institute and the system owner (for a 3rd party-owned system).

iii. The LOI must, at a minimum, include:

1. All the documentation required in this FOA to satisfy the minimum application requirements
2. For systems not requiring a competitive procurement: evidence of the solar installation(s) financing in the form of a financier's Letter of Commitment, or a signed letter by the proposed system owner confirming its ability to self-finance
3. For a purchased system, calculate and provide the simple payback period. For a 3rd party-owned system, show the cost savings to the site owner over a 25-year period.

iv. On a case-by-case basis, MEA may accept documentation that demonstrates the vendor's intent to engage in a PPA with the applicant in lieu of a formal LOI. This flexibility acknowledges that certain applicants may not have finalized a formal LOI at the time of application. However, such documentation must provide reasonable assurance that the applicant and vendor are in active discussions, and a satisfactory PPA rate is expected to be negotiated. This applies to both competitive and non-competitive procurement processes.

Competitive Application Criteria

Award selection will prioritize applicants that demonstrate the greatest cost-benefit and greenhouse gas (GHG) savings per dollar spent. As a proxy, the calculation evaluates the energy generation (kWh) per dollar of MEA grant funding (kWh/$). All evaluation criteria will be considered concurrently, with kWh per MEA grant dollars having the most weight.

Applications will be considered based on all of the following weighted criteria (please see Attachment B: Competitive Documents Checklist):

a. Cost-Effective Climate Impact: Calculated by energy generation (kWh) per dollar of MEA

grant funding (kWh/$)

b. Community Engagement Plan: Engagement plan demonstrating how students, staff, faculty and the surrounding communities are involved with the solar installation(s), CCEMP and, if applicable, the Clean Energy Sector Course Development including: communications and opportunities to include the solar installation(s) in educational (curricular or otherwise) activities
c. Courses: Applicant actively teaches (i.e. has offered at least one course in the last four semesters) solar energy courses and would utilize the solar system(s) for educational value
d. MSI: Applicant is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as Minority Serving Institution (MSI)
e. Scope Justification: Justification of how funds will be used to advance or expand activities consistent with the scope of work
f. Student Internship Utilization: Pursuit of the optional student internship bonus
g. Clean Energy Sector Course Development Pursuit: Pursuit of the optional clean energy sector course development bonus
h. Past Performance: Consideration of the applicant's history with MEA-funded initiatives, including the progress of implementing prior awards, adherence to timelines, achievement of expected outcomes, and efficient use of funds.
i. Environmental Justice: Applicant is a community college located in a census-tract with a median income at or below 80% of the median income for the State, or in an overburdened or underserved community.

Evaluation & Ranking Methodology

Applications will be reviewed by a team that may include individuals from MEA and other entities with experience in energy, construction, and capital development. The review process will be guided by the following evaluation criteria and priority factors outlined below. Due to the complexity of the selection process, MEA may request additional information after all applications have been submitted to facilitate the evaluation process.

Each application will be evaluated and ranked based on the following methodology. This evaluation will consider all relevant criteria, including the solar installation(s) impact, curriculum development, and community engagement, ensuring a comprehensive assessment aligned with program goals.

Table 1 (pages 7-10) provide the criteria, maximum points available for each criterion, and the weight of each criterion toward the overall score. Attachment C: Example Calculations provides an example of how these calculations will be made. To enhance geographic diversity, after overall scores are determined, MEA may also consider an applicant's geographic location when determining a grant decision.

All applications will be ranked from highest to lowest based on their overall score based on the evaluation criteria in the chart below. To ensure geographic diversity, the highest-ranked application from *each* applicant will be considered first for an award. If all eligible applicants receive one award and additional funds are available, the remaining budget will be allocated to other applications in order based on the ranking by overall score.

"Environmental Justice" is a competitive evaluation criterion – not a minimum eligibility criterion – for all initial awards to the highest-ranking applications utilizing the anticipated budget of $8

million, funding sourced from the sale of allowances under § 2–1002(g) of the Environment Article. However, if MEA receives qualified applications in excess of the anticipated $8 million budget, MEA has the discretion to allocate additional available funds to this program. If the additional funding available is sourced from compliance fees paid under § 7–705(b) of the Public Utilities Article, additional funding restrictions will apply[1]. Awards funded by these compliance fees will be limited in the following ways:

1) Eligible applicants: only community colleges, established pursuant to title 16 of the Education Article, located in a census-tract with a median income at or below 80% of the median income for the State, or in an overburdened or underserved community. A list of census tracts of these communities can be found here.
2) Eligible activities: only Solar Installations
3) Ineligible activities: Campus Clean Energy Master Plan, Clean Energy Sector Course Development, Student Intern Support

Evaluation Criteria

The primary element for evaluation is the GHG savings per dollar of MEA grant funding. As a proxy, the calculation evaluates the energy generation (kWh) per dollar of grant funding (kWh/$).

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria for Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Applications

Criteria	Description	Evaluation Type: Required or Competitive Criteria	Points	Weight (%)
Solar System(s) Installation	All required solar system(s) documentation submitted	Required	N/A	
Solar System(s) Installation	Solar installation(s) and construction schedule with estimated timeline to completion	Required	N/A	
Solar System(s) Installation	Identification of staff person who will be responsible for overseeing the continuation of the activities outlined	Required	N/A	
CCEMP	One page narrative describing the anticipated scope of work and how this will complement existing applicant's facilities, utilities, sustainability and/or climate action plan	Required [for first time grantees]	N/A	
CCEMP	One or two (no more than 2) page narrative describing how the CCEMP will identify specific and actionable	Required [for first time grantees]	N/A	

[1] compliance fees paid under § 7–705(b) of the Public Utilities Article may be used only to make loans and grants to support the creation of new Tier 1 renewable energy sources in the State that are owned by or directly benefit: (i) low– to moderate–income communities located in a census tract with an average median income at or below 80% of the average median income for the State; or (ii) overburdened or underserved communities, as defined in § 1–701 of the Environment Article.

	opportunities for renewable energy generation and energy efficiency and reduce the applicant's carbon footprint			
CCEMP	Identification of staff person who will be responsible for overseeing the continuation of the activities outlined	Required [for first time grantees]	N/A	
Financing	Solar installation(s) budget showing full costs and requested funding from MEA	Required	N/A	
Financing	Procurement strategy documentation	Required	N/A	
Leveraged Funds	Brief narrative description demonstrating how federal incentives will be leveraged and explaining any additional leveraged funding	Required	N/A	
Cost-Effective Climate Impact	Energy generated per MEA dollar awarded	Competitive	Calculated	50
Community Engagement Plan	One to two page engagement plan demonstrating involvement of students, staff, faculty, and surrounding communities in the solar installation(s) and educational activities	Competitive	0-5	10
Courses	Documentation demonstrating that the applicant is actively teaching solar energy courses	Competitive	0-1	5
MSI	Documentation that the applicant is recognized as a U.S. Department of Education as a Minority Serving Institution (MSI)	Competitive	0-1	5
Scope Justification	Brief narrative description with a justification of how funds will be used to advance or expand activities consistent with the scope of work	Competitive	0-5	10
Student Internship Utilization	Bonus points for utilizing student interns in the completion of the CCEMP or Clean Energy Sector Course Development activity	Competitive	0-1	5
Clean Energy Sector Course Development	Pursuit of Clean Energy Sector Course Development funding	Competitive	0-1	5

Pursuit	Note: Past awardees to this program will receive the full points for this criteria			
Past Performance	Consideration of the applicant's history with MEA-funded initiatives, including the progress of implementing prior awards, adherence to timelines, achievement of expected outcomes, and efficient use of funds. Note: All new applicants to this program will receive the full points for this criteria	Competitive	0-3	5
Environmental Justice	Applicant is a community college located in a census-tract with a median income at or below 80% of the median income for the State, or in an overburdened or underserved community.	Competitive: Awards funded with initial budget from the sale of allowances under § 2–1002(g) of the Environment Article Required: if additional funds available from compliance fees paid under § 7–705(b) of the Public Utilities Article after RGGI funds depleted.	0-1	5
Workforce Development Plan	Brief narrative description outlining the development of courses and programs to train students in the clean energy sector, including creating major, minor, or certificate programs	Required	N/A	
Educational Program Implementation	Brief narrative description of the plan to implement the developed educational programs and ensure their continuity	Required	N/A	
Financing	Complete budget showing full costs	Required	N/A	

	for the solar installation(s) and additional requested eligible activities (CCEMP, Clean Energy Sector Course Development, student internships) and the requested funding from MEA		
Scope Justification	Brief narrative description with a justification of how funds will be used to advance or expand activities consistent with the scope of work	Required	N/A

Deliverables

The following deliverables are anticipated to document activities conducted during the grant period:

1. A grant implementation plan to include the following:
    a. Identification of any key position(s) relevant to overseeing activities required by the grant, as well as the role(s) of individuals, consultants, etc. who will be responsible for completing the grant-funded work
    a. Outline of the process, including a timeline, by August 1st, 2026
    b. Explanation of how funding from this grant will be used to meet the scope and deliverables of this grant award
2. Final close-out report outlining progress, identification of next steps occurring after the grant performance period, and a summary of lessons learned and recommended best practices
3. Quarterly progress reports and invoices submitted to MEA

Funding

A total of $8,000,000 is anticipated to be available for this program. The amount awarded may vary depending on the quantity and quality of applications received. MEA will not provide grant funds for costs that exceed the total expenditure minus all incentives.

Participation in MEA grant programs is voluntary. If awarded a grant and to ensure the secure transmission of grant funds, grantee recipients of MEA funding are generally required to receive electronic payments from the State of Maryland. Electronic payments are set up through the State of Maryland's Comptroller's Office. Grantee must fill out and submit the "ACH/Direct Deposit Authorization for Vendor Payments Form X-10" to the Comptroller's Office via the submission methods outlined on the X-10 form. ACH/Direct Deposit Authorization for Vendor Payment Form X-10 should not be sent to MEA.

Failure to submit ACH/Direct Deposit Authorization Form X-10 may result in award reimbursement being delayed. If an applicant is unable to receive ACH/Direct Deposit payments, MEA may provide an exception to this requirement on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of MEA.

Partial Awards

In general, partial awards are anticipated under this program. Awards will be distributed until funds are exhausted. In the case where the remaining funds are insufficient to fully fund an

additional qualified application, a partial award will be offered to the applicant based on budget availability.

Review Process

The review of applications will follow a structured, multi-stage process:

1. The program manager will first review each application for eligibility, ensuring it meets the minimum criteria outlined in the FOA
2. Each member of the evaluation team will independently score the application based on the specified competitive criteria
3. The evaluation team will then compile individual scores, finalize overall scores, rank all applications accordingly, and make final recommendations for funding

Applications will be reviewed by a team that may include individuals from MEA and other entities with experience in energy, construction, and capital development. The review process will be guided by the evaluation criteria and priority factors outlined in this FOA. The final grant amount for each Grantee will be made after review of all proposals received and is subject to funding availability for the Program and any relevant statutory requirement applicable at that time.

Equitable Funding Acknowledgment and Approach

MEA recognizes that Higher Education Institutions across Maryland are diverse in their needs, priorities, and financial constraints. Understanding this variability, it is a fundamental objective of the FY2026 Program to provide equitable funding opportunities to all Colleges and Universities across the state, regardless of their circumstances.

To effectively support communities in Maryland that are disproportionately affected by environmental harms, MEA prioritizes equity. This is particularly relevant in the context of delivering benefits from numerous environmental programs. In Maryland, an “Overburdened Community” is defined as any census tract where at least three environmental health indicators are above the 75th percentile statewide, in accordance with the criteria established by Maryland's Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 (Ch. 38 of the 2022 Laws of Maryland). MEA aims to use such designations to help guide policy and allocation decisions to promote health and sustainability**.**

Grant Program Specific Provisions

1. Funding through this program is intended to support the installation of renewable energy technologies, primarily solar system(s). Initiatives involving fossil-fuel or other combustion technologies that produce greenhouse gas emissions are not eligible for funding.
2. Examples of ineligible activities include:
    a. Efforts that expand the use of fossil fuel or natural gas technologies, except in cases where meeting one of the exemptions or those efforts are technically infeasible
    b. Expansion of infrastructure that results in an expansion of fossil fuel delivery volume
    c. New installations of fossil fuel or natural gas fired technologies
    d. Efforts aimed at significant lifespan extensions of fossil fuel-fired systems beyond basic health and safety repairs, or efforts that significantly upgrade or enhance such systems

Grant Program General Provisions

MEA grant programs are covered by general provisions that apply to all of its grant programs, the most current version of these General Provisions is General Provisions v3 2.11.22. The latest approved version of this document will be incorporated into all FY2026 grant agreements issued by MEA.

Please note the following specific General Provisions:

- MEA will not reimburse any grantee for costs incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement, unless MEA agrees otherwise in writing.
- Unless otherwise specified in the Grant Agreement, MEA will not disburse grant funds for work that has yet to be performed; costs that have yet to be incurred or are not sufficiently documented; or costs that are inconsistent with the purpose, terms, and conditions of the Grant, as determined by MEA.

Submission Instructions

To apply:

1. Navigate to the MY MEA Portal and select 'Login' on the top right of the page
2. Create an account by following the instructions on the page
    a. Select 'Organization' under 'What role best fits you?'
    b. Check the box 'Are you representing a Higher Education Institution'
    c. Complete the questions using your institution's information
    d. you will need to verify your account via email
3. On the My MEA home page the Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Program.
4. Review the information on the page and select "Apply' when ready
    a. Complete the application with the required information
    b. Upload all the required documents and authorized signature

All documents must be received by MEA no later than 3:00 P.M. EDT, November 14, 2025. MEA will not accept any application packages after this deadline under any circumstances, and all documents received by the deadline will constitute the entire submission. If electronic submission is not possible, an Applicant should contact MEA via email at Schools.MEA@Maryland.gov or by calling Program Manager Kristen Keim at 443-571-6976 no fewer than fourteen (14) days prior to the application deadline to arrange an alternative method of submission.

Contact Information

For more information or assistance, please visit the FY2026 Higher Education Clean Energy Grant Program website or contact:

Kristen Keim
Program Manager, Schools Decarbonization Program
Kristen.Keim@maryland.gov

ATTACHMENT A: DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST

The following documents are required, as minimum criteria, for all applications to be considered.

1. Signed IRS FORM W9
2. Letter signed by applicant's Authorized Representative authorizing the submission of application
3. Identification of a staff person who will be responsible for overseeing the continuation of the activities outlined in this grant announcement after the end of the grant's period of performance
4. Complete budget showing full costs for the solar installation(s) and additional requested eligible activities (CCEMP, Clean Energy Sector Course Development, student internships) and the requested funding from MEA

Solar System(s) Installation Supporting Documentation

1. A system diagram detailing locations, dimensions, and orientations of the proposed system on the property
2. A site map exhibiting the location of the system on the property
3. A prospective schedule and plan for campus design and construction of the solar system(s)
4. Output(s) from a Solar Energy Calculator (i.e. National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) PVWatts Calculator, or PVsyst's Photovoltaic Software, or equivalent) document showing expected energy production
5. A basic electrical schematic of the facility's electrical system (a one-line diagram is acceptable) and where/how the solar system(s) connects to it
6. A brief narrative (no more than two pages) describing the anticipated scope of work and how this will complement existing applicant's facilities, utilities, sustainability and/or climate action plan

Solar System(s) Financial Documentation

- For a purchased system, calculate and provide the simple payback period

-OR-

- For a 3rd party-owned system, show the cost savings to the site owner over a 25-year period

Campus Clean Energy Master Plan Supporting Documentation
(only required for first-time grantees)

1. For first time grantees of this program: A prospective schedule and plan for CCEMP
2. For first time grantees of this program: A brief narrative (no more than two pages) describing how the CCEMP will identify specific and actionable opportunities for renewable energy generation and energy efficiency to reduce the applicant's carbon footprint

Competitive Procurement Requirements Documentation

1. Competitive Procurement Required:If the applicant must conduct a competitive procurement process, the applicant must provide:
    a. Documentation showing that it understands the current pricing for a solar system. If a PPA is contemplated, provide documentation demonstrating that a satisfactory PPA rate may be negotiated or achieved.
    b. If a PPA is contemplated, a copy of a signed contract or Letter of Intent (LOI) between the site owner and system owner
2. Non-Competitive Procurement Required: If a competitive procurement is not required, provide a LOI between the applicant and the installer (for a purchased system) or a LOI between the institute and the system owner (for a 3rd party-owned system).
    a. The LOI must, at a minimum, include:
        i. All of the documentation required in this FOA to satisfy the minimum application requirements
        ii. Evidence of the solar installation(s) financing in the form of a financier's Letter of Commitment, or a signed letter by the proposed system owner confirming its ability to self-finance
        iii. For a purchased system, calculate and provide the simple payback period. For a 3rd party-owned system, show the cost savings to the site owner over a 25-year period.

Clean Energy Sector Course Development

(only required if this activity is pursued by the applicant)

1. Workforce Development Plan: a brief narrative description, (no more than two pages) outlining the development of courses and programs to train students in the clean energy sector, including creating major, minor, or certificate programs.
2. Educational Program Implementation: a brief narrative description (not more than two pages) of the plan to implement the developed educational programs and ensure their sustainability.

ATTACHMENT B: COMPETITIVE APPLICATION DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

1. Community Engagement Plan: Demonstrate how students, staff, faculty, and the surrounding communities are involved with the solar installation(s) and if applicable, the CCEMP and the Clean Energy Sector Course Development. Include communications and opportunities to integrate the solar installation(s) into educational (curricular or otherwise) activities. Provide a narrative no more than two pages.
2. Courses: Documentation to support that the applicant actively teaches (i.e., has offered at least one course in the last four semesters) solar energy courses and would utilize the solar system(s) for educational purposes.
3. MSI: Documentation that the applicant is recognized as a U.S. Department of Education as a Minority Serving Institution (MSI)
4. Scope Justification: Briefly explain (no more than one page) how the funds will be used to advance or expand activities consistent with the scope of work.
    a. Benefit to applicant and students: Briefly explain (no more than one page) how the grant will provide the maximum benefit to the applicant and their students, including energy reductions, cost savings, and leveraging factors.
5. Student Internship Utilization: Provide a narrative (no more than one page) detailing how the applicant would plan to utilize the student intern(s). Briefly identify their role, their internship supervisor(s), and the department the interns would support.
6. Clean Energy Sector Course Development Pursuit:
    a. Workforce Development Plan: a brief narrative description, (no more than two pages) outlining the development of courses and programs to train students in the clean energy sector, including creating major, minor, or certificate programs.
    b. Educational Program Implementation: a brief narrative description (not more than two pages) of the plan to implement the developed educational programs and ensure their sustainability.

Attachment C: Example Calculations

Below are two hypothetical applications (A and B) with raw values for the given criteria.

Table A: Example Applications

Application	**Cost-Effective Climate Impact (kWh/$)**	**Community Engagement Plan** (0-5)	**Courses** (0-1)	**MSI** (0-1)	**Scope Justific-ation** (0-5)	**Student Internship Utilization** (0-1)	**Clean Energy Sector Course Development Pursuit** (0-1)	**Past Performance** (0-3)	**Environmental Justice** (0-1)
A	600	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
B	800	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0

Step 1: Normalize the Calculated Values

- Energy Generated: Min = 600, Max = 800
- Leveraged Funding: Min = 300,000, Max = 350,000
    - **Normalized Value = (Value - Min) / (Max - Min)**

Table B: Normalization

Application	**Normalized Energy Generated**	**Normalized Leveraged Funding**
A	(600-600)/(800-600) = 0	(300,000-300,000)/(350,000-300,000) = 0
B	(800-600)/(800-600) = 1	(350,000-300,000)/(350,000-300,000) = 1

Step 2: Apply Weights

Table C: Weighting Factors

Application	**Cost-Effective Climate Impact (50%)**	**Community Engagement Plan (10%)**	**Courses (5%)**	**MSI (5%)**	**Scope Justification (10%)**	**Student Internship Utilization (5%)**	**Clean Energy Sector Course Development Pursuit (5%)**	**Past Performance (5%)**	**Environmental Justice (5%)**
A	0 * 50% = 0	1/5 * 10% = 2	1/1 * 5% = 5	1/1 * 5% = 5	1/5 * 10% = 2	1/1 * 5% = 5	1/1 * 5% = 5	0/3*5%= 0	1/1 *5% = 5
B	1 * 50% = 50	2/5 * 10% = 4	0/1 * 5% = 0	0/1 * 5% = 0	0/5 * 10% = 0	1/1 * 5% = 5	1/1 * 5% = 5	2/3*5%= 3	0/1*5% = 0

Step 3: Sum the Weighted Scores

Application	Total Weighted Score
A	0 + 2 + 5 + 5 + 10 + 2 + 5 + 0 +5 = 29
B	50 + 4 + 0 + 0 + 0 + 5 + 5 + 3 + 0= 67

Results: In the above example, Application B would be more competitive than Application A. Application B would receive funding first based on its higher final score.