



## Funding Opportunity Announcement

### Public Facilities Solar FY2024 Grant Program

**Program Description:** The Public Facilities Solar Grant Program (PFS) makes grant funding available to support the installation and planning of solar arrays on existing public facilities and infrastructure. The term “public facilities” refers to a facility site or building where the local jurisdiction owns or maintains a long-term lease (greater than 15 years), controls the facility, and uses the facility for its official purposes. Grant funds will be available in FY24 in two distinct Areas of Interest (“AOI”): funds for purchased systems (“AOI 1”), and funds for third-party-owned (TPO) systems (“AOI 2”).

**Type of Grant Program:** First-come, first-served. Grants will be issued to eligible projects until program funding is depleted.

**Application Deadline:** **March 8, 2024**, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

**Eligible Applicants:** City, County or Municipal government entities, public universities, community colleges, and public schools may apply for grants under this program.

**Eligible Activities:** PFS grant program funds can be used for the installation of rooftop solar systems on existing public facilities, buildings, and infrastructure; or installation of solar canopies over existing parking lots or parking garages owned or controlled by a local government entity. **NOTE:** Ground mounted solar arrays are not eligible for funding under this program.

**Program Budget:** A total of up to **\$1,000,000** is anticipated to be available for PFS grant program projects. The amount awarded may be more or less depending on the quantity and quality of applications received.

**Evaluation Criteria:** MEA will evaluate each complete application received based on the value of the project to the Maryland taxpayer, which is determined, in part, by using the criteria listed on the Application Checklist, which is provided on the Cover Page of the Application form.

The primary criteria for project evaluation is the amount of Greenhouse Gas emissions reduced per dollar of grant funding. The calculation evaluates the energy generation (kWh) per dollar of grant funding (kWh/\$). A scaling

factor of 3 is used.

Additional evaluation criteria include:

- Project provides resiliency to critical infrastructure (2 points)
- Project is designed for incorporation into a resiliency plan (1 point)
- Applicant is a school or public institution of higher education that actively teaches solar energy courses and would incorporate the solar array into clean energy educational opportunities for students (1 point)
- Project demonstrates to the public or to students the results/energy savings produced by the project (Example: A public internet dashboard or a publicly visible dashboard) (1 point)
- Solar canopy project that includes electric vehicle (EV) charging capability or is EV charger capable (1 point)

MEA may request additional information from any applicant, after all applications have been submitted, to facilitate the evaluation process. Applicants are not required to have already participated in the MSEC program, but will receive consideration for having done so or for having adopted clean energy policies.

Geographic Diversity: Please note that, in order to enhance geographic diversity, MEA at its sole discretion may consider a project's location within the State when determining an award decision.

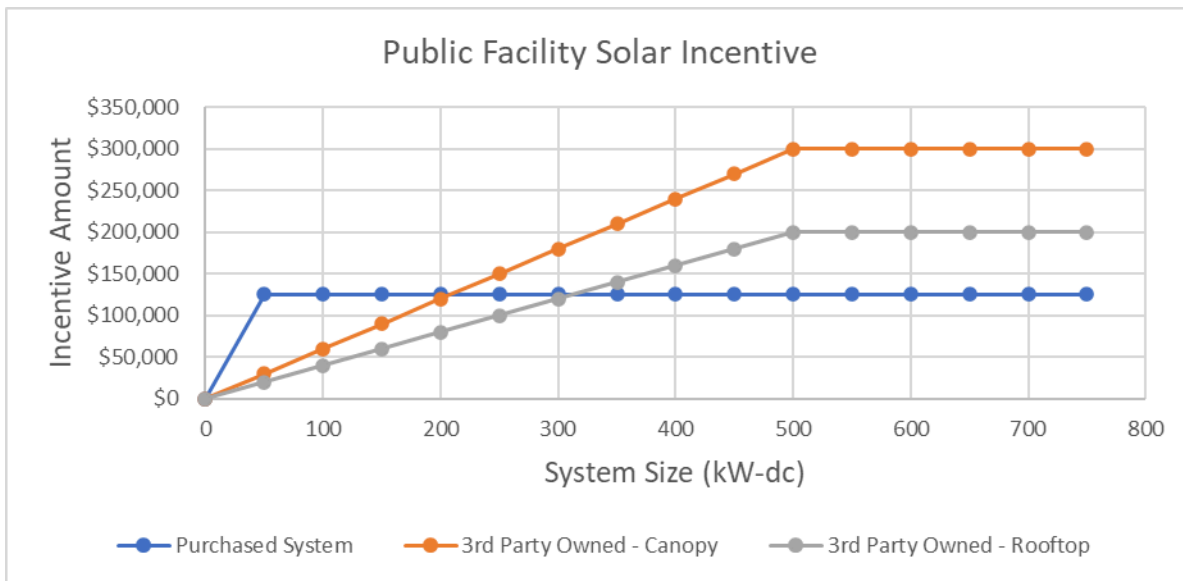
**Review Process:** The MEA Program Manager will assemble a Review Team of at least three MEA staff members. Individuals from outside MEA with relevant experience may be included at the Program Manager's discretion. All Review Team members will review each complete application using the criteria stated on the Application Review Checklist (Attachment A to this FOA). Proposed projects will be ranked from highest to lowest. Despite the ranking, any Review Team member may still recommend against an award for a reasonable cause. Any recommendation against an award will be discussed by all team members during an in-person or virtual meeting. A majority vote of the team members will be required to disqualify an application for a reasonable cause. Any disqualification will be documented in the Program Manager's award recommendation memo to the MEA Director. Recommendations for funding are subject to the amount of funding available. The review team may, at its sole discretion, recommend one or more additional projects in priority order for funding if funding becomes available before the end of the fiscal year. The Program Manager will make recommendations to the Director, incorporating input from the Review Team.

**Award Formula:**

**AOI 1:** For installation of a solar system purchased/owned by the grantee, up to \$2,500/kW of grant funds are available with a cap of \$125,000 per

project. On a case-by-case basis, MEA may consider increasing the grant amount to \$3,000/kW with the cap remaining at \$125,000 per project when unique circumstances or a compelling reason is specified in the application.

**AOI 2:** For installation of a TPO solar canopy system, up to \$600/kW of grant funds are available, with a cap of \$300,000. For installation of a TPO rooftop system, up to \$400/kW of grant funds are available, with a cap of \$200,000. To be eligible, a system must be net metered.



**Partial awards:** Partial awards may be awarded under the Program. Full grant amounts will be awarded for approved projects, based on ranking, from highest to lowest. If sufficient funds are not available to fully fund a project, the applicant will be given an option to accept partial funding, based on budget availability, for the project as originally submitted. If the applicant does not accept partial funding for the project, MEA will offer the remaining funding to the remaining approved but unfunded applicants in order of ranking (highest to lowest). MEA will follow this process until all funding has been expended, or until all remaining approved applicants have rejected the offer. If funding is still available, MEA has the discretion to explore with each applicant who has submitted an approved, but unfunded, project (by order of ranking) whether a modified project with appropriate requirements may be mutually agreeable. While MEA anticipates using the full amount of allocated funds for this program, MEA reserves the right to obligate some, all, or none of the FY24 Public Facilities Solar Grant Program budget, based on the quality and eligibility of applications submitted.

**Required Application Documents:** The following documents are required for each application package, regardless of AOI:

- 1) Completed application Workbook (Excel);
- 2) Evidence of the Site Owner’s control of the project site for at least 15

years post project completion in the form of an SDAT printout, a recorded deed (or other appropriate documentation accepted by MEA);

The following additional documents should be submitted depending on the status of the procurement activities.

- 1) IRS Form W-9 for the applicant (organization designated to receive the grant funding). **NOTE: The applicant must always be the government entity, no exceptions;**
- 2) The applicant must be in Good Standing with the [Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation \(DAT\)](https://dat.maryland.gov/pages/default.aspx)<sup>1</sup> . The applicant must provide proof of Good Standing with the application. This can be done by providing either (1) a screenshot or PDF of the applicant's status in DAT's [Business Entity Search](https://egov.maryland.gov/businesses/Pages/Internet-Certificate-of-Status.aspx)<sup>2</sup> that indicates a Good Standing status; OR (2) a copy of a Certificate of Good Standing, which can be obtained on DAT's website [here](https://dat.maryland.gov/businesses/Pages/Internet-Certificate-of-Status.aspx)<sup>3</sup> .
- 3) If a PPA is contemplated, a copy of a signed contract or letter of intent between the Site Owner and System Owner. The letter of intent must include, at a minimum, the location and estimated capacity of the solar system,
- 4) A copy of a signed contract or letter of intent between the Installing Contractor and the Site Owner (AOI 1) (Site Owner and System Owner for AOI 2). The Letter of Intent must, at a minimum, include the location and estimated capacity of the solar system,
- 5) A system diagram detailing locations, dimensions, and orientations of the proposed system on the property,
- 6) A site map exhibiting the location of the system on the property (image from Google Earth/Maps © preferred, digital/print photograph is acceptable);
- 7) Evidence of project finance 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 the project,
- 8) Construction schedule (assuming the Grant is signed on April 1, 2024.
- 9) PVWATTS, PVSYST (or equivalent) document showing expected energy production,
- 10) A basic electrical schematic of the facility's electrical system (a one-line diagram is acceptable) and where/how the solar array connects to it. If part of a resiliency plan, provide a separate diagram showing potential future components of the resiliency system.
- 11) For a purchased system (AOI 1), calculate and provide the simple payback period (show your work). For 3<sup>rd</sup> party-owned systems, show the cost savings to the site owner over a 15-year period (show your work).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dat.maryland.gov/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://egov.maryland.gov/businesses/Pages/Internet-Certificate-of-Status.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://dat.maryland.gov/businesses/Pages/Internet-Certificate-of-Status.aspx>

**Submission Instructions:** MEA encourages the use of electronic applications to streamline processing and reduce environmental impacts. If you cannot apply electronically, please contact MEA no later than seven (7) days prior to the application deadline to identify an alternative method to submit the application.

The application spreadsheet and required documents should be submitted electronically to MEA via email to: [solar.MEA@Maryland.gov](mailto:solar.MEA@Maryland.gov) .

Only if specifically authorized by MEA, an applicant should mail the supporting documents to:

Maryland Energy Administration  
Attn: Public Facility Solar Grant Program  
1800 Washington Blvd. Suite 755  
Baltimore, MD 21230

**Notice:** All information submitted in a CECD Grant Program application is subject to the Maryland Public Information Act (PIA). If the submitter of the Application believes information in the Application is confidential and therefore should not be disclosed, the submitter shall clearly mark this information and identify it by page and section or line number. Upon request for information from a third party, MEA is required to make an independent determination whether the information must be disclosed under the PIA. Designating information as confidential does not guarantee that it will be withheld from disclosure.

**Grant Program General Provisions:** MEA grant programs are covered by general requirements that will be made part of the grant agreement between MEA and a grantee. A copy of the General Provisions document is available on MEA's website [here](#)<sup>4</sup> ; these provisions will be incorporated into each FY24 grant agreement issued by MEA.

#### **Program-Specific Requirements:**

##### **Definitions:**

- Existing Infrastructure: An existing building, parking lot or parking structure, land covered by asphalt or cement that has been in service for at least 2 years.
- Ground Mounted: A solar power system mounted to the ground on land with existing groundcover (not concrete or asphalt)
- Problem Specific: To solve a specific problem (i.e., aircraft beacon, parking lot light) where running a power line may not be the best solution.
- Public Facility: A facility site or building where the local jurisdiction owns or maintains a long-term lease (greater than 15 years), controls the facility, and uses the facility for its official purposes. Specifically included in this definition are public libraries, museums, schools, hospitals, auditoriums, sport arenas, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://energy.maryland.gov/Pages/all-incentives.aspx>

- Project: A clean energy conversion system or assemblage of clean energy conversion systems and related systems and installation components that operate in a coordinated manner, which may or may not be connected to a power distribution grid. Systems that affect the same electric meter in the same direction with the same stimulus are considered to be coordinated systems.

**Restrictions and Limitations:**

- MEA will only provide grant funds to a grantee who is the site owner (city, county, municipal government entity). Each applicant will be required to attest to its compliance with Sections 14-416 and 17-303 of the State Finance and Procurement Article (as applicable).
- At least one person certified as a Solar PV Installation Professional (PVIP), PV Design Specialist (PVDS), or PV Installer Specialist (PVIS) by the [North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners \('NABCEP'\)](#) must be involved in the design and/or installation of the community solar array. Each applicant will be required to provide the name and certification number of this individual(s).<sup>5</sup>
- The Grantee (receiving the funding) will be responsible for submitting all reporting documents, including invoices, to MEA.
- Only one MEA renewable energy grant may be awarded per project.<sup>6</sup>
- Each project will be given at least three years to be completed. When necessary, an extension may be requested from MEA but must be made at least two months prior to the expiration of the existing grant. (AOI 1 and AOI 2).
- A Maryland Historical Trust review must be completed without an adverse finding before grant funding may be paid.
- Solar systems smaller than 10 kW will not be considered unless they are submitted to address a specific off-grid problem. To be considered, a justification will be required. Projects smaller than 10 kW may be considered by MEA, at its sole discretion, on a case-by-case basis.
- The solar system must meet minimum system requirements as specified in IEEE 1547 and the National Electric Code.
- Each component of the solar system must be listed or labeled by a recognized national testing laboratory.

**Grant Funding and Payment:**

- For AOI 1 projects, Grantee may invoice **up to 10% of the total award** at the completion of detailed planning; and **up to 65% of total award funding after ordering all major construction materials** (solar panels, inverters, wiring, switchgear, connector boxes, etc.).
- Upon receipt of a grant agreement signed by both the grantee and MEA, MEA will set

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<sup>5</sup> An exception may be approved by MEA on a case-by-case basis for installation of a small project by a Master Electrician who holds all applicable business licenses for Maryland.

<sup>6</sup> MEA encourages grantees to consider [energy efficiency](#) in concert with a PV project. A grantee may also apply for, and receive an MEA Commercial, Industrial and Agricultural (CI&A) grant for energy efficiency or a Lawton Loan. Developers may use multiple energy efficiency or renewable energy grants from other State or Federal agencies to fund this project.

aside funding for the proposed project specified in the agreement through an encumbrance of funds.

- Any remaining grant funds for AOI 1 projects will be available after the project is online, producing creditable power. The Grantee will inform MEA when the project is completed, meaning that all zoning requirements are met, all permit inspections are passed and permits are closed, all commissioning tests are satisfactorily completed, and permission to operate has been received from the utility. MEA, at its sole discretion, will then conduct a site visit. Upon completion of the site visit, the Grantee will submit a Final Invoice and Completion Report. Upon receipt of a complete and accurate invoice and completion report, MEA will process the remaining grant funds for payment to the Grantee.
- MEA reserves the right to request documentation of hours worked, receipts for materials ordered, etc., to justify funding amounts.
- For any project that is inspected by MEA, all major deficiencies (as specified by MEA) must be corrected before MEA will make grant funds available. Minor deficiencies should be addressed or corrected
- Participation in MEA grant programs is voluntary. If selected for award 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.

- Notice of geographical funding restrictions: This program *may* be funded in whole or in part by alternative compliance payments made under Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard. For projects where this funding would apply, MEA will reach out directly to the grantee. Md. Code Ann., State Government § 9-20B-05(i) specifies the allowable uses for solar alternative compliance payments to loans and grants to support the creation of new solar energy sources that are owned by or directly benefit:

Low-to-moderate communities located in a census tract with an average median income at or below 80% of the average median income for the state; or, underserved communities, as defined in §1-701 of the Environmental Article.

For fiscal year 2024, MEA is identifying low-to-moderate communities using 2021 median household income data published by the U.S. Census Bureau at the census tract level as part of the American Community Survey. For overburdened and underserved communities, MEA will use census tract data obtained through the [Maryland Department of the Environment \(MDE\) Environmental Justice Screening Tool version 2.0 Beta](#).

The list of census tracts eligible to own or directly benefit from grant funding originating from solar alternative compliance fees in fiscal year 2024 is available on MEA's [website](#).

**Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs):** Except for problem specific small projects, projects must register for and receive Solar Renewable Energy Certificates (SRECs). Each grantee will be required to verify the successful registration of projects with the Maryland Public Service Commission and with PJM Interconnection. For information concerning SREC registration, consult the PJM EIS website at <https://www.pjm-eis.com/>.

**Program Changes:** Any update (e.g., extension of a deadline) or clarification about the Program and any corrections to the Program information will be available on the Public Facility Solar Grant Program webpage. In addition, MEA will communicate clarifications and updates made after the application deadline directly to applicants or grantees, as applicable, by letter or e-mail.

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.

**Questions can be directed to:**

**Briggs Cunningham, Energy Program Manager**

[solar.mea@Maryland.gov](mailto:solar.mea@Maryland.gov)

**410-537-4070 (w)**

Last Modified: December 12, 2023

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