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Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) FY23 Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program (Solar and Geothermal)

This FOA contains the Terms and Conditions for the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program.

Program Description: The Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program provides rebates for the installation of selected new clean energy systems. This FOA addresses solar (i.e., photovoltaic and thermal) and geothermal technologies.

The Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program was previously called, and is synonymous, with the Residential Clean Energy Grant Program.

Program Regulations: Regulations governing the Clean Energy Rebate Program (formerly known as the Clean Energy Grant Program) can be viewed in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), section [14.26.04](#). In the event of a conflict between the regulations and this FOA, or other program documents, the regulations take precedence.

Type of Rebate Program: Awards are made on a first-come, first-served basis.

Application Deadline: Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the fiscal year (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023); however, issuance of a rebate by MEA cannot be assured if the Program Budget has been exhausted.

Eligible Applicants: A Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program applicant is eligible if they are “an owner of a residential property that is (a) located in the State; and (b) the primary residence of the owner of the residential property at the time of application”.¹

Eligible Technologies: The Program provides rebates for the installation of new solar photovoltaic (PV) (i.e., panel and shingle installations), solar thermal, or geothermal systems (the “project”) by eligible applicants.

- To be eligible, the installed technology must comply with the defined capacity limits outlined in the Award Formula section below.

¹ As outlined in COMAR 14.26.04.05.

- Geothermal systems include deep wells, shallow loops or open pond systems feeding a ground source heat pump. The replacement of the HVAC portion of a pre-existing geothermal heat pump system is ineligible for award.

Anticipated Program Budget: An anticipated total of \$3,600,000 is available from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to fund both this program and the Clean Burning Wood and Pellet Stove Rebate Program (covered by a separate Funding Opportunity Announcement). The actual amount available may be more or less depending on the quality and quantity of applications received and the Maryland Energy Administration’s available resources within a given year.

Program funding status for the Residential Clean Energy Program is regularly posted on the Program website on the “Weekly Status Report” Excel spreadsheet.

If the number of eligible applications received for the Program exceeds the Program budget, MEA may accept and retain applications pending the availability of additional funding for the fiscal year. Funding, as well as the award amount by technology, is **not** guaranteed for any application.

**Program Minimum
Criteria:**

To be eligible for an award, an application must meet the following minimum criteria:

- the home is located in Maryland;
- the Applicant owns the home;
- the home is the primary residence of the applicant at the time of application;
- the home is not owned by an irrevocable trust;
- the clean energy system meets the minimum system size criteria;
- all required permits have been issued from the Authority Having Jurisdiction (typically the city or county);
- if applicable, all permitting inspections have been satisfactorily passed and documented;
- the utility has issued a “Permission to Operate” certificate;
- the system has been documented as being paid in full;
- photographic documentation showing the installed clean energy system has been provided;
- the application is complete, signed, dated, and contains the homeowner applicant’s federal tax identification number;
- the application is submitted within 12 months from the date the system was installed²; and,
- if a PV project, a NABCEP-certified PV Installation Professional has been involved in the design or installation of the solar system.

² The date of installation is the latest of the following dates: the system is paid in full; the system passes its final inspection, the system receives Permission to Operate from the utility, or system construction is complete.

Review Process: Subject to Program funding availability, applications will be reviewed in the following manner:

- Upon receipt, each application is reviewed for completeness.
 - If an application was submitted using the online web portal (<https://egov.maryland.gov/mea/CleanEnergy/>), the application is not considered complete until the required signature sheet that is generated and emailed to the Applicant at the end of the web portal process is signed, sent, and received by MEA.
- Complete applications are reviewed, and if found to satisfy Program criteria, the application is submitted for approval and payment.

Award Formula: The following clean energy system incentives are available through the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program for eligible applications.

Clean Energy Technology	Eligible System Capacity Range	Rebate Amount
Solar Photovoltaic (PV)	Minimum 1 kW-DC	\$1,000
Solar Shingles	Minimum 1 kW-DC	\$1,000
Solar Water Heating (SWH)	Minimum 10 sq. ft.	\$500
Geothermal (New Installation)	Minimum 1 ton	\$3,000

Phase Out of Geothermal Heat Pump

Replacement Incentive: The incentive for geothermal heat pump replacement is being phased out. However, MEA will continue to accept applications for geothermal heat pump replacement projects that are under contract on or before September 15, 2022.

The deadline to submit an application for a geothermal heat pump replacement project under contract as described above is June 15, 2023, or 12 months after the project completion date, whichever is earlier. The geothermal heat pump replacement incentive amount will be \$500 per project.

Partial awards: Partial awards will not be offered under the Program.

Required Application Documents: Required application documents are listed below. In addition to these documents, MEA may require additional documentation (e.g., a Permission to Operate certificate from the utility) to demonstrate compliance with any program requirements.

Applications that are submitted exclusively in a paper format (i.e., not through the CERP online application portal at <https://egov.maryland.gov/mea/CleanEnergy/>) shall include the following documents to be considered complete:

- the signed and dated paper application;

- documentation showing passed final inspection for all permits required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction;
- documentation showing the project has been paid for in full;
- for geothermal replacement projects that are under contract on or before September 15, 2022, submit a copy of the signed contract or complete application, as applicable,
- photographic documentation showing the installed clean energy system; and,
- documentation showing property ownership and primary residency.

Applications submitted via the electronic portal

(<https://egov.maryland.gov/mea/CleanEnergy/>) shall include the following documents to be considered complete:

- documentation showing passed final inspection for all permits required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction;
- documentation showing the project has been paid for in full;
- photographic documentation showing the installed system;
- documentation showing property ownership and primary residency; and,
- a signed, complete signature sheet (The signature sheet is electronically sent to the applicant after the electronic portal receives the application).

Note: If documentation showing property ownership and primary residency is not provided, as a courtesy MEA may try to find this information using the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) Real Property Database

(<https://sdatt.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>) to enable the application review to proceed. If the SDAT information does not show property ownership and primary residency information that matches the information on the application, MEA will not be able to process the application until the applicant provides the necessary documentation.

If photos are not provided, as a courtesy MEA may try to find the necessary photo documentation using Google Earth. If the necessary photo documentation cannot be obtained in this way, MEA will not be able to process the application until the applicant provides the necessary photographs.

If permit documentation is not provided, as a courtesy, MEA may try to find necessary permit documentation using online records. If the necessary permit information cannot be obtained in this way, MEA will not be able to process the application until the applicant provides the necessary permit information.

MEA may require the applicant to provide a copy of the signed Permission to Operate document from the local utility company.

In all cases, the applicant is responsible for providing required documentation. Failure to provide required documentation when requested is grounds for MEA to cancel the application.

Submission

Instructions: MEA encourages the use of "[Online E-Application Portal](#)" that can be found on the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program website for solar PV, solar thermal, and

new geothermal systems.³ As the portal does not have the capability to allow an applicant to save data, please ensure all required supporting documents are in electronic form (.pdf, .jpeg, .docx, .xlsx, etc.) and ready to be uploaded before starting an Online E-Application.

Alternatively, a paper version of the Program application can be downloaded and printed from

<https://energy.maryland.gov/residential/Pages/incentives/CleanEnergyGrants.aspx>

. After completing and signing the document, the complete application (to include all supporting documents) should be mailed to MEA at the following address:

Maryland Energy Administration
Attn: Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program
1800 Washington Blvd. Suite 755
Baltimore, MD 21230

Once MEA has received an application, the applicant can track the application receipt and status by checking the Residential CERP Weekly Status Report on the Program website, which is typically updated once per week.

If the applicant requests that a rebate be mailed to a different address from the installation address of the primary residence (e.g., mailed to a P.O. Box), the rebate applicant must use the paper application process.

If the applicant requests that a rebate be mailed to a different address from the installation address of the primary residence, the applicant must also submit an IRS W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification form with the application. The name, mailing address, and the taxpayer identification number on the W-9 must be identical to the information on the application.

MEA may also request a W-9 form to verify the applicant's identity in certain circumstances that include: a change in name, a change in address, or a period of inactivity in the state's financial payment system.

Failure to submit a timely W-9 when requested is grounds for MEA to cancel the application.

Additional requirements

1. Eligible Properties: Property Requirements

³ See: <https://energy.maryland.gov/residential/Pages/incentives/CleanEnergyGrants.aspx>

A. The property on which the clean energy system is installed must serve as the primary residence of the Rebate Applicant⁴, and the Rebate Applicant must be listed as an owner of the property.

B. A property held in trust is not eligible for a Residential Clean Energy Rebate unless the property is the primary residence of a grantor of a revocable trust who has the right to revoke the trust.⁵ A property owned by an irrevocable trust is not eligible for a Residential Clean Energy Rebate.

C. A second home, rental home or recreational property, is not eligible for a Residential Clean Energy Rebate.⁶ Examples of a “recreational property” include recreational vehicles (RVs) and boats.

D. A Residential Clean Energy Rebate may be issued to a property which is leased by the rebate Applicant only if the property owner is an eligible co-applicant.

E. A property owned by a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), where the only member of the LLC is the applicant (or the applicant and spouse), is also eligible for a rebate.

F. A property that is used for both a residence and a business will be considered by MEA based on the “Use” field listed in the [Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Real Property Data Search](#).

- For any property with a residential “use”, the application will be considered under the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program.
- For any property with a non-residential “use”, the applicant may have to reapply under the Commercial Clean Energy Rebate Program.

G. If an applicant owns their home (i.e., the building) but leases the ground where the home is located, the applicant is ineligible for an award for a ground-mounted solar PV, ground-mounted solar hot water system, or a geothermal system.

H. Residential Clean Energy Rebates are limited to one Rebate per qualifying clean energy technology per property.

- If the capacity of a clean energy system that already received an award under the Program is increased, an additional Residential Clean Energy Rebate will not be issued to the system for the increase in capacity.
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) is considered to be the same technology as Solar Shingles.

I. MEA will no longer refer projects to the Maryland Historical Trust for review; however, applicants must obtain permission for a project from all local historic preservation commissions with authority over the project, if required. MEA may deny an application if the project results in an adverse effect on a historic property.

2. Eligible Systems/Technologies: Clean Energy Technology Requirements

A. Solar Photovoltaic (“PV”) Systems - Solar Photovoltaic systems must be installed and operated in compliance with the requirements of the local building codes and the following national safety certification systems:

⁴ See COMAR 14.26.04.06.A.1.

⁵ See COMAR 14.26.04.06(B)(2).

⁶ See COMAR 14.26.04.06(B)(3).

(1) Underwriters Laboratories (UL) - Solar PV system hardware must be in compliance with all applicable performance and safety standards, including UL 1741, Standard for Inverters, Converters, Controllers, and Interconnection System Equipment for Use with Distributed Energy Resources, and UL 1703, Standard for Flat-Plate Photovoltaic Modules and Panels.

(2) Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) - Solar PV systems must meet the requirements of IEEE 1547, Standard for Interconnecting Distributed Resources with Electric Power Systems with applicable requirements of local electrical codes and the National Electric Code (NEC).

B. Geothermal Heat Pumps - Geothermal Heat Pumps must meet the ENERGY STAR standards specified on the ENERGY STAR website:

A list of ENERGY STAR geothermal heat pumps can be found at

<https://www.energystar.gov/productfinder/product/certified-geothermal-heat-pumps/results>

C. Solar Water Heating (SWH) Systems - Solar Water Heating (SWH) Systems must meet the requirements of the local codes and possess the Solar Rating and Certification Corporation OG-100 Certification, as specified in the following website:

<https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/ICC9012015/toc>

A list of qualified systems can be found at: <https://secure.solar-rating.org/Certification/Ratings/RatingsSummaryPage.aspx?type=1>

3. Eligible System Installers (Contractors)

A. Maryland Authorized Business - Any installation contractor installing a clean energy system for which an award is sought under this Program must be incorporated or [registered to do business in the State of Maryland](https://egov.maryland.gov/businessexpress/entitysearch)⁷; possess all licenses and certifications required by all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations for the work being performed; and be in good standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation.

- Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC) - A MHIC license is required to install solar panels for a homeowner.⁸
- A licensed master electrician is required to connect solar panels to an electric system.⁹

B. North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) - Solar PV installation contractors with a staff of 49 or fewer individuals must maintain at least one staff member who

⁷ <https://egov.maryland.gov/businessexpress/entitysearch>

⁸ <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/mhic/mhicfaq.shtml>

⁹ <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/mhic/mhicfaq.shtml>

possesses a NABCEP PV Installation Professional (PVIP) Certification. Solar PV installation contractors with a staff of 50 or more individuals must maintain one staff member who possesses a NABCEP PV Installation Professional Certification for every 25 non-administrative employees. Solar PV installation contractors that have been registered to do business in the State of Maryland less than 12 months prior to the submission of a Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application are exempt from this requirement.

D. Self-Installations – Projects that are self-installed are not eligible for residential clean energy rebates, with the exception of solar PV projects that are self-installed by individuals who hold a NABCEP PV Installation Professional Certification AND are a Master Electrician licensed to work in Maryland.

4. Application Requirements

A. Application Timeframe - A Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application shall be submitted to MEA only after the clean energy system has been installed, paid in full, and has passed all final inspections required by the County or local permitting authority and received Permission To Operate from the local electric utility. Applications received for incomplete systems will not be considered.

B. Application Deadline - A Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application must be submitted to MEA no more than twelve (12) months from the latest of the following dates: the date that the clean energy system is installed, paid in full, passed all final inspections required by the County or local permitting authority, or received Permission to Operate from the local utility. This date is considered the Project End Date and should be entered on the application as such. With good cause and at its sole discretion, MEA may grant an extension of the twelve-month deadline on a case-by-case basis.

C. Supporting Documentation - The following attachments must be included with the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application and meet the specified requirements:

(1) Final Inspection Documentation - Documentation of passed final inspections for all permits required by the County or local permitting authority must be provided. Acceptable documentation includes photos or copies of final inspection stickers, copies of inspection reports, copies of certificates of use and occupancy, and printouts from online permit inquiry systems provided by County or local permitting authorities. The applicant is responsible for contacting the County or local permitting office for the jurisdiction in which the applicant resides to obtain permitting requirements.

(2) Payment Documentation - Documentation that the clean energy system has been paid in full by the applicant must be provided. Typical documentation is in the form of \$0.00 balance itemized invoices from installation contractors and vendors.

- If a \$0.00 balance itemized invoice is not available, MEA will accept receipts or letters from installation contractors and vendors indicating a \$0.00 balance, with itemized proposals.
- For system purchases that are financed (but not leased) through the company that is also installing the system, a "payment-in full" document is still required from the installation

arm of the installing company. A loan from the finance arm of the installer (or other financial institution) is considered a separate transaction and does not negate a “payment in full” document from the installer.

(3) Photo Documentation of the Clean Energy System - Photo documentation of the completed clean energy system must be provided. Please see the list below for photo requirements for each clean energy technology:

(a) Solar PV Systems: Photos of all panels in the system, the inverters (unless the system utilizes microinverters), and the meter must be provided. Include photos of the front of the home taken from all streets (“street view”) and sidewalks from which the home is visible.

(b) Geothermal Systems: Photos of the heat exchanger(s), air distribution system, and outdoor location of the ground/pond loops must be provided.

(c) Solar Water Heating (SWH) Systems: Photos of the collectors and hot water tank(s) must be provided. Include photos of the home taken from all the streets (“street view”) and sidewalks from which the home is visible.

(4) Property Ownership and Primary Residence Documentation - For this Program, property ownership and primary residence are initially determined using the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) Real Property database. To enable this review, an applicant should provide a [screenshot or copy of the SDAT Real Property Data](#) information indicating that the Rebate Applicant is a listed property owner and that the property is the applicant’s primary residence.^{10,11}

(a) If the property is the Rebate Applicant's primary residence, but the SDAT Real Property Data information currently indicates that the property is not the Applicant's primary residence, a copy of the Rebate Applicant's Maryland driver's license/photo ID or Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) change of address card listing the installation property as the Applicant's residence may be provided to document primary residency at the property. **For security reasons, Rebate Applicants should redact social security numbers, driver's license numbers, and dates of birth before submission of copies of photo identification to MEA.**

(b) If a Rebate Applicant is the property owner, but the Real Property Data information does not list the Rebate Applicant as a property owner, a copy of the Rebate Applicant's Maryland driver's license/photo ID or MVA change of address card may be provided along with alternative property ownership documentation. Alternative property ownership documentation will be determined by MEA on a case-by-case basis (and may include title, deed, or sales agreement documentation). **For security reasons, Rebate Applicants should redact social security numbers, driver's license numbers, and dates of birth before submission of copies of photo identification to MEA.**

¹⁰ <https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>

¹¹ The SDAT Real Property Data form is not the same as a Real Property Tax bill.

(c) Active Duty Military Service - If a Rebate Applicant is a member of the military on active duty status who owns a residential property in the State of Maryland that serves as the Rebate Applicant's primary residence, but whose permanent residence is located within another state, the applicant is eligible for a Clean Energy Rebate Program rebate. The Rebate Applicant must provide a copy of the Real Property Data information indicating ownership of the property (or alternative ownership documentation determined by MEA on a case-by-case basis if the Real Property Data form does not list the Rebate Applicant as a property owner), a copy of the Rebate Applicant's military ID, a copy of the Rebate Applicant's driver's license, and a copy of a utility bill for the property. If a spouse or other property resident is listed on the utility bill, alternative documentation will be determined by MEA on a case-by-case basis. **For security reasons, Rebate Applicants should redact social security numbers, DoD ID numbers, driver's license numbers, and dates of birth before submission of copies of photo identification to MEA.**

D. ****MISSING INFORMATION POLICY****

- If required information or attachments are missing from a Residential Clean Energy Rebate application, or the application or attachments present information which requires further clarification, MEA will notify the Rebate Applicant in writing (by email or letter).
- If a response from the Rebate Applicant or the Applicant's Installation Contractor is not received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date on the MEA correspondence, MEA will send a second, final notice which cancels the rebate application.
- If an applicant provides the required information within fourteen (14) calendar days of the cancellation notice, MEA may, at its sole discretion, reopen the application.
- Rebate Applicants whose applications are canceled for lack of response may reapply, provided the new application is submitted within twelve (12) months of the Project End Date.

5. Use of Personal Information

In accordance with Section 4-501(c)(3) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, MEA is required to advise Applicants of the following:

- A. The information being requested by the Application is necessary to document the completion of the project and to ensure installation of a qualifying system.
- B. Failure to provide all required information will result in cancellation of a Rebate application.
- C. Upon submission for payment, some of this information will be provided to other agencies of the State to process the payment of the rebate.
- D. The applicant's or rebate recipient's name, project information (e.g., technology, system capacity) and rebate request status may be publicly accessible on our website.
- E. Unless otherwise provided by law or court order, portions of the information provided by an applicant may be subject to disclosure upon request for inspection under Maryland's Public

Information Act. To the extent permitted by law, personal information will not be disclosed except for the purpose of processing a rebate application.

F. As set forth in Section 4-502 of the General Provisions Article, an applicant has the right to inspect, amend, or correct a personal record as maintained by the Clean Energy Rebate Program.

6. Tax Status of Residential Clean Energy Rebates

MEA does not provide tax information or tax advice. Questions should be directed to a qualified tax professional.

Additional Information: Program questions can be directed to:

For information concerning a rebate application, contact an MEA Energy Specialist by email at cerp.mea@maryland.gov or by phone at 410-537-4000. Program specific questions may be directed to:

David Comis, Energy Program Manager

David.Comis@Maryland.gov

410-537-4064 (w)

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