

Community Energy Plan Grant Application Form Program Year 3

Program Background

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“Board” or BPU”) has created a Community Energy Plan Grant (“CEPG”) program for municipalities to develop a Community Energy Plan to meet the goals of the state’s Energy Master Plan (“CEPG Program”). [New Jersey’s Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050](#) (“EMP”) established that community-level action is necessary to achieve the state’s goal of 100% clean energy by 2050.¹

The CEPG Program will help municipalities plan for energy resilience, renewable energy, and efficiency to work toward a better environment for all residents. By using the state’s EMP as a guide, grantees will work to develop sustainable strategies that increase clean energy production, reduce energy use, and cut emissions. This grant will be available to all municipalities, with additional support and funds provided to overburdened municipalities as defined below.

The goal of the CEPG Program is to enable municipalities to review a list of suggested initiatives that will help the community identify a set of activities that will set them on a trajectory to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The 12-month CEPG Program process is intended to support a review of potential initiatives and to select those best suited to municipal needs and opportunities. The Community Energy Plan, as defined in the “Program Summary” section below, is expected to be completed and submitted to the BPU within 12 months of the grant award.

Program Summary

Community Energy Planning is the process by which communities collaboratively select emissions-reducing initiatives that fulfill the EMP’s goals (“Planning Process”). The Planning Process includes assembling a planning team of local municipal staff, elected officials, relevant municipal board and commission members, and community volunteers and/or green team members (“Planning Team”). This Planning Team assesses the municipality’s needs to identify the opportunities for energy resiliency,²

¹ New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, [2019 New Jersey Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050](https://nj.gov/emp/docs/pdf/2020_NJBPU_EMP.pdf), https://nj.gov/emp/docs/pdf/2020_NJBPU_EMP.pdf.

² “Energy Resilience” is defined by the United States Department of Energy as: “the ability of the grid, buildings, and communities to withstand and rapidly recover from power outages and continue operating with electricity,

renewable energy, and energy efficiency. Based on these identified opportunities, the planning team will need to construct a plan to effectuate these opportunities throughout their municipality (“Community Energy Plan”).

The core activity for each Planning Team is to work through the [Community Energy Plan Workplan Template](#).³ The BPU’s Office of Clean Energy Equity, working with partner Sustainable Jersey, has developed the Workplan Template so that it identifies a slate of practical and impactful energy strategies that municipalities can implement. This allows municipal CEPG recipients to focus their efforts on assessing the actions that will contribute to improving local energy performance and achieving statewide energy goals.

Using the Workplan Template as a means of effectuating the Community Energy Plan, the Planning Team will develop and determine the steps that need to be taken and a timeline for the implementation of these steps for each initiative selected as part of its Workplan Template. The Workplan Template will list key department lead and/or partner entities for accomplishing each initiative. The Workplan Template will enable the Planning Team to begin to identify potential sources of funding for implementation of the identified initiatives.

The Planning Team should engage the entire community during the Planning Process through public meetings to determine the targeted initiatives and develop a timeline for implementation. For example, a community might determine how many electric vehicle (“EV”) charging stations are currently publicly accessible and set a target for providing more EV charging stations in its community. Alternatively, a community may wish to prioritize energy efficiency for local businesses and plan an outreach campaign to help businesses take advantage of state or utility energy efficiency incentives.

The CEPG Program does not fund implementation of projects identified by the municipality. The CEPG is to be used for creating the municipality’s Community Energy Plan itself.

Section A: Application Instructions, Terms and Conditions

The application form in Section B below is intended only for municipalities submitting a CEP proposal for consideration by the BPU for participation in the CEPG Program.

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

Program Year 3

Application Period Opening Date: December 19, 2023

Application Period Close Date: May 24, 2024

heating, cooling, ventilation, and other energy-dependent services.” United States Department of Energy, *Energy Resilience*, <https://www.energy.gov/eere/energy-resilience>.

³ Sustainable Jersey, Community Energy Plan Workplan Template: A Sustainable Jersey Guide, https://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Actions_and_Certification/Actions/Energy/Community_Energy_Plan_Workplan_Template10_2021.pdf (hereafter, “Workplan Template Guide”)

I. Minimum Qualification Requirements

The purpose of this application is for municipalities to create a Community Energy Plan that aligns local community initiatives with the State's EMP. All municipalities that submit a completed application for a CEPG are eligible to receive a **\$10,000** grant award. Municipalities identified as an overburdened municipality, as more fully described below in Section b. Overburdened Municipalities Defined, are eligible for a **\$25,000** grant award.

a. Eligibility and Procedure

The CEPG Program is open to proposals that meet the following minimum requirements. The applicant ("Applicant"), as defined below, must:

1. Be a municipality;
2. Submit a completed CEPG Program application in full (application is in Section B, subsections I and II below);
3. Submit a completed and notarized Applicant Certification form (found in Section C); and
4. Submit a signed, dated, and approved municipal resolution documenting the governing body's approval of the application and commitment to implement the required Community Energy Plan Planning Process with the completed application form. See Appendix C ("Form of Resolution Evidencing Municipal Support of Application") for a form of resolution.

b. Overburdened Municipalities Defined

Overburdened Municipalities have been identified based on the below criteria:

1. The municipality has over 50% of its population living in an Overburdened Community (OBC) Census Block as defined by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to New Jersey's Environmental Justice Law, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157; and
2. The municipality meets one or both of the following criteria (either A or B):
 - a) Over 35% of the population is living under 200% of the poverty level according to U.S. Census 2019 ACS data; or
 - b) The municipality has a distress score of 40 or higher according to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) [Municipal Revitalization Index](#) (MRI).⁴

A list of Overburdened Municipalities is in Appendix A.

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

⁴ See DCA, 2020 Municipal Revitalization Index – Alphabetical (2020), https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nj.gov%2Fdca%2Fhome%2F2020_MRI_Scores_and_Rankings.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK.

1. All questions pertaining to the CEPG Program application form should be directed to: community.energy@bpu.nj.gov
2. Each municipality applying to participate in the CEPG Program must complete and submit the application form in full. The application form can be found in Section B (“Community Plan Grant Application Form”) below. Attachments should be placed at the end of the Application package.
3. Original ink/wet signatures on all forms and certifications of this application form are required.
4. **The applicant certifications contained in Section C must be notarized.** Failure to have the Application certification form notarized will cause an application to be deemed administratively incomplete.
5. **Failure to complete all sections of the Application or to submit all required attachments will cause the Application to be deemed administratively incomplete.**
6. Completed applications must be emailed to: community.energy@bpu.nj.gov no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the Application Period Close Date of **May 24, 2024** to be considered for a Program Year 3 CEPG.

III. Terms and Conditions

A. General Terms and Conditions

1. The “Applicant” is defined as a municipality that submits a CEPG application form located in Section B, subsections I and II herein.
2. All applications must comply with all local, state and federal rules, regulations and laws.
3. By submitting an application, the Applicant acknowledges on behalf of all project participants that the information included in the application is subject to disclosure under the Open Public Records Act (“OPRA”), N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. Based on information received, the Board and/or other state, federal, county, regional or local agencies may use aggregated information in reports and evaluations, and the geographic location may be used to update Geographic Information System (“GIS”) mapping. Furthermore, the Applicant understands that the list of approved CEPG projects will be published on the Board’s website, at <https://njcleanenergy.com/commercial-industrial/programs/community-energy-plans>, after such time as Board Staff (“Staff”) has selected all participating Applicants.
4. Amendments or supplements to the CEPG application form will be made available via the New Jersey Clean Energy Program (“NJCEP”) website at www.njcleanenergy.com. This application form may be modified for future application periods at any time without prior notification to Applicants.
5. Only applications that are deemed administratively complete by the Application Period Close Date of May 24, 2024 will be considered for participation in the CEPG Program Year 3. An application will be deemed administratively complete only if:
 - (1) all questions are answered;
 - (2) all required attachments are included; and
 - (3) all required signatures are included (See Section A.II. above).

At Staff’s option, Applicants will be notified if their application is deemed administratively incomplete and, thus, not eligible for consideration for Program Year 3. Please be aware that Staff is not required to provide such notification. Applicants with Applications that are not Administratively Complete may submit a new, Administratively Complete Application for consideration in the next program year (Program Year 4), without advantage or disadvantage.

6. The Applicant may be required to supplement the information provided in the application form upon request from the Board or Staff.

B. Evaluation of Applications and Approval of Projects

1. Following the Application Period Close Date, an evaluation committee will review and evaluate each application.
2. Applications will be evaluated for completeness to be considered for participation in the CEPG Program. Municipalities must complete the Community Energy Plan Application Checklist provided in Appendix B. Municipalities must submit a fully executed Resolution approved by the municipality's governing body (Town Council, City Council, etc.) in support of the grant application. A form for such Resolution is located at Appendix C ("Form of Resolution Evidencing Municipal Support of Application").
3. At the Application Period Close Date, Staff may reject applications that are incomplete or that do not meet a minimum standard for selection, as set forth in this Community Energy Plan Grant Application Form.

C. Milestones for Approved Projects

1. By accepting the CEPG, an Applicant receiving such grant ("Grantee") agrees to complete the following scope of work:
 - i. Each Grantee must establish a team for the purposes of reviewing the Strategies in the Workplan Template (see Section IV. ("Sustainable Jersey Technical Assistance and Resources" under the "[Community Energy Workplan Template](#)" and determine which Initiatives will be incorporated into its Community Energy Plan;⁵
 - a. CEPG planning teams in municipalities that are Overburdened Municipalities must meet with Sustainable Jersey staff within six (6) weeks of the award;
 - b. All other municipalities must meet with Sustainable Jersey staff at least once within the first three (3) months of the award;
 - ii. Within three (3) months of the CEPG award, each Grantee must submit to Sustainable Jersey and the Board a proposed budget based on the budget guidelines listed in Section E ("Use of Funds/Budget Guidelines");
 - iii. Within six (6) months the Workplan Template must be completed by all municipalities (the Workplan Template is a shared document such as a Google Sheet that all members of the planning team and Sustainable Jersey staff can access.);
 - iv. Within eight (8) months, the municipality must conduct a minimum of one additional public meeting to engage the community in the creation of the Community Energy Plan;
 - v. Within twelve (12) months, the municipality must finalize the Community Energy Plan through **formal** adoption by the municipal governing body through the passage of a municipal resolution and submit a copy of the completed Plan to the Board.
2. If the Grantee would like to change the original budget, the Grantee must submit a formal change request ("Budget Change Request") to the Board, at community.energy@bpu.nj.gov . The Budget

⁵ See Workplan Template Guide.

Change Request must outline the original budget line item(s), the change requested, and an explanation for the change.

3. At the end of the Grant Term, the Grantee will be required to submit a copy of the municipal Community Energy Plan to the BPU. The Grantee will also be required to submit a copy of the resolution that their municipal governing body passed, evidencing the adoption of the Community Energy Plan.
4. Reporting requirements for the CEPG are dependent on the amount awarded:
 - i. Recipients of a \$10,000 CEPG are to submit one expenditure report at the end of the twelve (12) month Grant Term; and
 - ii. Recipients of a \$25,000 CEPG are to submit three (3) quarterly reports and one (1) final report on or before the end of the twelve (12) month Grant Term.

D. Submitting an Application

Completed applications must be emailed to: community.energy@bpu.nj.gov no later than 5:00 PM Eastern Time on the Application Period Close Date of May 24, 2024 in order to be considered for a Program Year 3 CEPG.

E. Use of Funds / Budget Guidelines

Non-Overburdened Municipalities

If accepted, your municipality is eligible to receive a \$10,000 grant award.

Overburdened Municipalities

If accepted, your municipality is eligible to receive a \$25,000 grant award (See Appendix A for a list of overburdened municipalities).

Within 60 days of the completion of the Community Energy Plan, any remaining unused grant funds must be returned to the Board. **The Grantee has 60 days from the Grant Term end date to submit a final expenditure and programmatic report to the Board.**

Funds may be used for any purpose related to the creation - and to the creation only - of the Community Energy Plan. This includes staff salaries, overhead, consultants, supplies, and other direct expenses.

Funds cannot be used for implementation of projects, such as installation of EV charging stations or purchase of alternative fuel vehicles.

Sample Eligible Expenses	Sample Ineligible Expenses
• Stakeholder engagement costs (venue reservation, flyers to promote meeting to discuss CEPG, etc.) • Time for review of Workplan Template, creation of plan • Consultant costs (see Appendix D ("Use of Consultants" below)	• Purchase of electric vehicles • Purchase of solar panels • Installation of equipment (EV charging equipment, solar panels, etc.) • Food/refreshments for stakeholder meetings

- o Stakeholder engagement process - o Preparation of Community Energy Plan - o Feasibility study for EV charging infrastructure - o Feasibility study for solar siting	
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F. Use of Consultants

If the Applicant intends to hire a consultant as a part of its CEPG project, once the grant is awarded and the Grantee identifies the consultant, the Grantee must provide a copy of the written agreement with the proposed consultant. Awardees are advised to consult with Sustainable Jersey staff prior to engaging a consultant as part of the Milestones element detailed in Section III.C.i.b. above. Municipalities wishing to utilize the services of consultants should review the Sustainable Jersey [Community Energy Plan Guide with Model RFP Template for Consultant Services](#).⁶

Sample specifications for consultants in community energy planning:

- A. Community Energy Plan Community Stakeholder Engagement Process
- B. Community Energy Plan Development
- C. Administrative Support (grant reporting, etc.)
- D. Implementation Plan/Feasibility Study for specific project

IV. Sustainable Jersey Technical Assistance and Resources

Sustainable Jersey is a non-profit that since 2009 has been providing tools, training, and financial incentives to support communities as they pursue sustainability programs. As a partner with the BPU Office of Clean Energy Equity, [Sustainable Jersey](#) will provide technical assistance for both Community Energy Plan Grant Applicants and Grantees with specific commitment to work closely with Overburdened Municipalities.⁷ **To provide this assistance, all Applications and proposed budgets will be shared with Sustainable Jersey.**

Sustainable Jersey provides resources for Community Energy Planning including: [Guide for Sustainable Energy Communities](#)⁸

⁶ Sustainable Jersey, [Community Energy Planning Guide with Model RFP Template for Consultant Services](#) (August 2022), https://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Actions_and_Certification/Actions/Energy/Sustainable_Jersey_Community_Energy_Planning_Guide_08.2022.pdf.

⁷ Sustainable Jersey, <https://www.sustainablejersey.com/>.

⁸ Sustainable Jersey, [Sustainable Jersey Guide for Sustainable Energy Communities](#) (March 2022), https://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Actions_and_Certification/Actions/Energy/SJ_Sustainable_Energy_Communities_Guide10_2021.pdf.

Case studies and best practices of energy initiatives

[Sustainable Jersey Data Center](#)⁹

Comprehensive energy data by municipality

[Model Community Energy Plan](#)¹⁰

Sample community energy plan

[Community Energy Plan Workplan Template](#)¹¹

Workbook for selecting and prioritizing energy initiative

Section B: Community Energy Plan Grant Application Form

This Application form must be completed in its entirety. **Incomplete applications will not be accepted.** Attachments should be placed at the end of the Application package. All questions pertaining to the CEPG Program application form should be directed to: community.energy@bpu.nj.gov

I. Applicant Contact Information

Municipality: _____ **County:** _____

Mailing Address: _____

Zip Code: _____

Mayor: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Primary Municipal Contact for the CEPG (Business Administrator, Municipal Clerk, etc.):

Title: _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Primary Municipal Fiscal Contact for the CEPG (Municipal Treasurer, Finance Officer, Comptroller, etc.) (please note if same as above):

Title: _____

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Municipal Vendor ID #: _____

⁹ Sustainable Jersey, Data Center, <https://www.sustainablejersey.com/resources/data-center/>.

¹⁰ Gotham Township, Community Energy Plan (April 2023).
https://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Actions_and_Certification/Actions/Energy/Model_Community_Energy_Plan_for_GOTHAM_TOWNSHIP_June_2023.pdf.

¹¹ Workplan Template Guide.

Section C: Applicant Certification

Instructions: Original ink/wet signatures on all certifications are required.

All municipal applicants must complete the Application Certification that appears on the next page.

The Applicant Certification must be notarized.

Applicant Certification

The undersigned warrants, certifies, and represents that:

I, (Name) am the (Municipal Position)
of the Applicant, (Name of Municipality), and have been duly
authorized to file this Applicant Certification on behalf of my municipality; and

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

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

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

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Municipality: _____

County of: _____, State of New Jersey

State of New Jersey)

County of : _____) ss.

City of: _____)

This Applicant Certification was sworn to and subscribed before me on this

_____ **day of** _____, **20**_____

[SEAL]

Notary Signature

[STAMP]

Appendix A: Overburdened Municipalities

Municipality	County	Municipality	County	Municipality	County
Asbury Park City	Monmouth	Gloucester City	Camden	Perth Amboy City	Middlesex
Atlantic City	Atlantic	Guttenberg Town	Hudson	Phillipsburg Town	Warren
Bayonne City	Hudson	Haledon Boro	Passaic	Pine Hill Boro	Camden
Beverly City	Burlington	Hamilton Twp	Atlantic	Plainfield City	Union
Bridgeton City	Cumberland	Hi-nella Boro	Camden	Pleasantville City	Atlantic
Brooklawn Boro	Camden	Irvington Twp	Essex	Prospect Park Boro	Passaic
Burlington City	Burlington	Jersey City	Hudson	Riverside Twp	Burlington
Camden City	Camden	Keansburg Boro	Monmouth	Roselle Boro	Union
Cape May City	Cape May	Kearny Town	Hudson	Salem City	Salem
Chesilhurst Boro	Camden	Lakewood Twp	Ocean	Seaside Heights Boro	Ocean
City of Orange Twp	Essex	Lawnside Boro	Camden	So. Toms River Boro	Ocean
Clayton Boro	Gloucester	Lindenwold Boro	Camden	Sussex Boro	Sussex
Clementon Boro	Camden	Lodi Boro	Bergen	Teterboro Boro	Bergen
Commercial Twp	Cumberland	Long Branch City	Monmouth	Trenton City	Mercer
Deerfield Twp	Cumberland	Maurice River Twp	Cumberland	Union City	Hudson
Dover Town	Morris	Millville City	Cumberland	Upper Deerfield Twp	Cumberland
East Newark Boro	Hudson	Mount Holly Twp	Burlington	Victory Gardens Boro	Morris
East Orange City	Essex	New Brunswick City	Middlesex	Vineland City	Cumberland
Egg Harbor City	Atlantic	Newark City	Essex	West New York Town	Hudson
Elizabeth City	Union	North Bergen Twp	Hudson	West Wildwood Boro	Cape May
Fairfield Twp	Cumberland	Passaic City	Passaic	Westville Boro	Gloucester
Fairview Boro	Bergen	Paterson City	Passaic	Wildwood City	Cape May
Flemington Boro	Hunterdon	Paulsboro Boro	Gloucester	Woodbine Boro	Cape May
Freehold Boro	Monmouth	Pemberton Twp	Burlington	Woodbury City	Gloucester
Garfield City	Bergen	Penns Grove Boro	Salem	Woodlynne Boro	Camden
Glassboro Boro	Gloucester	Pennsauken Twp	Camden	Wrightstown Boro	Burlington

Appendix B: Required Attachments Checklist

Please check one box in the table below for each required attachment and any optional attachments

Required Attachments for all Applications	Attached?
Completed Application (Applicant Contact Information [Section B.i])	☐ Yes ☐ No
Application Certification (Section C)	☐ Yes ☐ No
Executed Municipal Resolution in support of grant application (Resolution Template provided in Appendix C)	☐ Yes ☐ No
<i>(list optional attachment here)</i>	
<i>(list optional attachment here)</i>	

Note: Additional attachments not reflected in the table above may be required and are identified throughout this application form.

Appendix C: Form of Resolution Evidencing Municipal Support of Application

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

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

The sample resolution is on the following page.

[Municipality]

RESOLUTION # _____

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Signature

Approved Date