

Building Decarbonization Grant Program

Application Guidelines

2026



Seattle
Office of Sustainability
& Environment

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ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRAM

In Seattle, buildings produce 40% of the city's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, mostly from burning fossil fuels like gas and oil for heating and appliances. These emissions pollute our air and accelerate climate change, which disproportionately harms frontline communities*. To combat this, Seattle aims to eliminate climate pollution and transition to 100% clean energy in our buildings and vehicles by 2050.

A key initiative to achieve this goal is the City's Building Emissions Performance Standard (BEPS) law, which sets emissions targets for existing nonresidential and multifamily buildings larger than 20,000 square feet. These targets strengthen every five years, with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by the 2040s for most covered buildings. This makes BEPS one of the most impactful climate actions the City of Seattle is taking.

Seattle's Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) is offering up to \$4 million in decarbonization grants in 2026 to support engineering design and/or capital retrofit projects aimed at helping building owners reduce GHG emissions ahead of future BEPS targets. The City will prioritize applications from multifamily and/or nonprofit-owned or -occupied buildings located in or serving frontline communities* for funding, but all buildings covered by the BEPS law are eligible to apply.

* **What is a frontline community?**

“Frontline communities” are Black people, Indigenous people, sovereign tribal nations, communities of color, immigrants, refugees, youths, elders, houseless people, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, people with low and no income, and people who work in outdoor occupations.

FUNDING DETAILS

Total Funding Available	up to \$4 million
Eligible Project Period	December 2026 - December 2030
Anticipated Number of Awards	8 - 12

WHAT WE FUND

Eligible projects must include one or both of the following elements:

- **Engineering Design** – *Developing retrofit-ready designs* that support future reductions in a building's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through building assessment, electrical and mechanical system analysis, and preparation of engineering plans.
- **Retrofit Implementation** – *Installing building upgrades* that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as replacing fossil-fuel-powered space heating, domestic hot water, cooking equipment, and other appliances with all electric equipment.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Owners of eligible buildings:

- Larger than 20,000 square feet
- Multifamily housing or nonresidential/commercial buildings (not industrial)

Priorities for funding: affordable housing, nonprofit-owned buildings, and buildings located in or serving Seattle's frontline communities. All eligible building owners may apply.

Only one application per building is allowed but an owner of multiple buildings may submit multiple applications.

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Developing an engineering design and site plan for conversion from fossil-fuel-powered equipment
- Performing a professional building infrastructure analysis for potential capital improvements needed to implement an equipment retrofit plan, as part of engineering design or retrofit implementation work
- Modifying duct work or piping necessary for a conversion, as part of a retrofit installation
- Upgrading electrical service *only as a part of* a retrofit installation
- Purchasing and installing high-efficiency electric equipment to replace existing fossil-fuel-powered equipment

What are examples of fossil-fuel-powered equipment?

gas-powered boilers, oil or gas furnaces, gas stoves, and equipment powered by district steam systems that use fossil fuels

What are examples of cleaner, high-efficiency alternatives?

electric heat pumps, centralized heat-pump water heating, electric/induction stoves

What types of projects have been awarded in the past?

- [2024 awarded projects](#)
- [2025 awarded projects](#)

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES & FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- Installation or plans to install solar panels
- Installation or plans to install backup battery storage
- Installation or plans to install fossil-fuel-powered equipment
- Upgrades or plans to upgrade electric service without a related equipment retrofit installation
- Weatherization efforts
- Building assessments or energy audits that are not clearly related to decarbonization

INFO SESSIONS

Join a virtual information session to learn more about the Building Decarbonization Grant Program, the application process, and to ask questions!

SESSION 1:

Wednesday, May 27; 12:30 - 1:30 PM

[Register here](#)

SESSION 2:

Tuesday, June 16; 5 - 6 PM

[Register here](#)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & DROP-IN OFFICE HOURS

Technical Assistance (TA) is available for free and on a **first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to nonprofit building owners and owners of small buildings without resources to pursue grants**. The TA consultant can meet with you virtually one-on-one to advise on engineering design and/or implementation project ideas, assist with the application worksheet, and/or identify opportunities in your building (e.g. review benchmarking reports or ask questions about systems and asset life). They will not be able to help you write your application responses.*

[To request TA, complete this form](#)

* Writing assistance may be available to eligible building owners (principally non-profits) from Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, which provides support for nonprofit and government entities seeking grants to reduce air pollution in the region. To determine your eligibility and request assistance, please email the Agency directly at GrantSupport@pscleanair.gov.

Open Drop-in Office Hours are also available. Click on the date/time for the Zoom link to join. No advanced registration necessary.

Eligibility & project questions:

- [Wed, 6/17, 1 - 3 PM](#)
- [Tues, 7/7, 9 - 10:30 AM](#)

Application platform support only:

- [Thurs, 8/6, 2:30 - 4 PM](#)

To request interpretation or other accommodations for Info Sessions, TA meetings, or Office Hours, email Grace.Buckman@Seattle.gov at least one week in advance

HOW TO APPLY

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE [HERE](#)
BY AUGUST 10 AT 8 PM PDT.**

Late applications will not be accepted.

An application worksheet can be found [here](#) to help you prepare your proposal offline before submission.

2026 APPLICATION SCHEDULE

May 20 – Application period opens

May 27, 12:30 PM – Info Session #1 [Register here via ZOOM](#)

June 16, 5 PM – Info Session #2 [Register here via ZOOM](#)

Aug 10 – **APPLICATIONS DUE BY 8 PM PDT**

Week of Sept 21 – Applicants notified of funding decisions via email*

Oct 1 - Dec 1 – Contracting period to finalize grant agreements*

Dec 1 – Grant agreements signed and projects may begin*

**Dates are subject to change*

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be pre-screened for eligibility before being sent to the Review Team. Scoring will have two components: points (quantitative) and assessment (qualitative). The strength of the proposals are evaluated on the application's alignment with the grant program priorities. These include:

- Building ownership and building use
- Applicant readiness and capacity
- Proximity to high-priority areas identified in the City's Racial and Social Equity (RSE) Composite Index
- Amount of emissions-reduction work needed to achieve BEPS compliance*
- Project size and scope of need
- Quality and feasibility of the project approach
- Plans to serve as a community resiliency hub during emergencies
- Focus on frontline communities

* The Review Team will use your building's most-recent Energy Benchmarking data to estimate this. You can check your compliance status with Seattle's Energy Benchmarking Law via the [Data Year 2025 Benchmarking Compliance Lookup Tool](#).

The full downloadable scoring rubric is available [here](#)

The Review Team may recommend a different award amount than requested.

Funding recommendations are approved by the City of Seattle's Mayor's Office. Once approved, OSE staff will work with grantees through the contracting phase. Approved applications do not guarantee funding. To receive funding, grantees must sign a grant agreement that meets program and City requirements.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF AWARDED

If awarded, building owners will be required to:

- Submit contracting requirements needed for the grant agreement (see below)
- Sign a grant agreement with the City before commencing with the project
- Participate in reporting meetings

Contracting Requirements

- Detailed scope of work, schedule, and budget (*free TA is available to support grantees with preparing these documents*)
- Completed W-9 submitted to the City
- Additional organizational details, such as Seattle Business License number and Washington Unified Business Identifier (UBI), if applicable
- Proof of insurance meeting the contract's specified requirements (certificate of insurance or equivalent documentation)

A copy of the contract template is available [here](#)

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must meet with OSE staff **at least three times** during the grant cycle, including the following:

- Kick-off meeting to review contract terms, scope of work, project schedule, and budget.
- Mid-point progress meeting to discuss project progress and provide a budget update.
- Final reporting meeting to close out the project and provide a final budget update.

Grantees must keep records and receipts for all grant fund expenditures. While receipts do not need to be submitted to the City, the grant agreement gives the City the right to audit these records. Grantees are expected to retain copies and provide them to OSE staff upon request.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What steps can we take to develop a strong proposal?

1. Carefully review the eligibility requirements before starting.
2. Discuss your project idea with OSE's TA consultant **before** drafting your proposal.
3. Allow plenty of time to develop your application draft with your team members.
4. Carefully review the scoring criteria when preparing your responses. The strongest proposals will cover all the items in the "green" sections of each qualitative category.

Can I submit more than one proposal?

Only one application per building is allowed. However, if you own multiple buildings, you may submit a proposal for each eligible building.

Can I reapply in 2026 if my building has previously received a Building Decarbonization grant?

Yes - buildings that previously received OSE **engineering design awards** can apply for implementation funding.

No - buildings that are already receiving OSE **retrofit funding** are not eligible for additional funding unless the new application expands the existing project (e.g., if you received funding to replace a gas-fueled furnace and now wish to replace the gas-fueled hot water heater).

Why aren't solar panel or backup battery storage projects eligible? Don't they combat climate change?

This program helps building owners reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their building's fossil fuel-powered equipment or systems, advancing them towards their greenhouse gas intensity targets in the City's new Building Emissions Performance Standard (BEPS) for existing buildings. Although solar and backup power are important for combating climate change, they fall outside this program's scope.

If I have questions about the application, whom do I contact?

You can reach out to SuJ'n Chon, OSE Grants Consultant (sujn.chon-c@seattle.gov). We are happy to answer questions, help you understand the application, or connect you to the TA Consultant if their capacity still allows.

APPLICANT TOOLS & RESOURCES

Building Decarbonization and Energy Efficiency Regulations:

- Seattle BEPS website: [Seattle Building Emissions Performance Standard \(BEPS\)](#)
- Implementation of Seattle BEPS: [BEPS Directors Rule](#)
- Washington CBPS website: [Washington Clean Building Standard](#)
- Seattle Benchmarking Ordinance: [Seattle's Energy Benchmarking How-to Guide](#)

Benchmarking, Analysis, and Tracking Building Carbon and Energy Efficiency:

- Free benchmarking website (requires account; Seattle's required tool under its Benchmarking Ordinance): [ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager](#)
- Decarbonization audit: [Building Hub GHG Reduction Audit](#)
- Decarbonization audit: [US Dept. of Energy Emissions Reduction Audit Guidance](#)
- Greenhouse gas factors (if not using Energy Star): [EPA Integrated Database \(eGrid\)](#)
- Greenhouse gas accounting guidance (going beyond Energy Star): [GHG Protocol](#)
- Greenhouse gas accounting guidance: [National Renewal Energy Lab \(NREL\)](#)
- Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future: [Multifamily Portfolio Emissions Tool](#)

How-to Guides on Reducing Carbon Emissions and Improving Energy Efficiency:

- NY Retrofit Playbook Decarbonization Guide: [Resource Efficient Decarbonization Guide](#)
- Seattle City Light Lab Website. Educational webinars on energy efficiency, building systems, code compliance, and more; links to many other resources like case studies and articles; consultations on emerging technologies (free): [The Lab at City Light](#)
- Smart Buildings Center's [Technical Webinar Series](#): live and recorded webinars on a variety of topics related to building operations, energy use, emissions reduction, and regulatory compliance (registration fees apply)
- Energy Star Building Upgrade Manual: [Energy Star BUM](#)
- Better Bricks (nonprofit) resource hub for improving commercial building energy efficiency in the Northwest: [Better Bricks](#)
- Portland Energy Conservation Inc. O&M best practices for energy efficiency: [Operations & Maintenance Assessments](#)

Finding and Selecting Vendors for Decarbonization and Energy Efficiency Projects:

- [Building Innovation Hub Service Procurement Guide: Step 5. Bid the Job](#)
- [Building Innovation Hub Service Procurement Guide: Step 6. Select the Right Vendor](#)

APPLICANT TOOLS & RESOURCES

Tools for Carbon and Energy Reduction:

- US Dept. of Energy lifecycle cost analysis software tool. Run alternative scenarios that combine different sets of decarbonization measures and/or vary implementation timelines: [DOE BLCC5 Program](#)
- Smart Buildings Center (Seattle) Tool Lending Library. A lending “library” of diagnostic tools available to building owners, managers, and energy service professionals in Washington and Oregon, for short-term data collection on energy-using equipment and systems (free): [Tool Lending Library](#):