

## June 26, 2024, Informational Webinar #1 Q&A

**Q:** Are non-profit organizations allowed to submit an application for multiple buildings?

**A:** A separate application is required for each building. Organizations are allowed to submit applications for more than one building.

**Q:** Are solar project improvements eligible?

**A:** DOE is not allowing solar improvements for this grant. There are some other DOE and EPA grants that may be possibilities and a federal tax incentive for nonprofit organizations. The state of Missouri has been awarded a Solar for All grant from DOE, and the state expects to support housing and some nonprofit organizations in disadvantaged communities. Additional DOE grants may be available later this year. A link for the federal tax incentive is [Understanding the Solar Tax Credit for Nonprofits \(everybodysolar.org\)](https://www.everybodysolar.org)

**Q:** In addition to the resources Ashley just shared, can you discuss the relationship between this and other related grant opportunities, those that support facility improvements and GHG reduction?

**A:** Some in our audience may have been involved or heard about a large EPA grant application that MARC submitted in late April to the EPA (Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant - CPRG). A significant portion of the grant, if it's awarded, would support building energy efficiency. Ashley was very involved in that grant application. That could be another source of funding to support buildings for either renewables like solar or for the more conventional energy conservation improvements that we've been discussing as part of this particular DOE grant. And for any eligible organization that's not able to be assisted through our grant, we'll make sure that we have you connected to that grant program if it's funded, and we're hoping to learn the outcome of that grant by late August. We will be sure and share the news with this audience.

**Q:** The question is to confirm that applicants will not need to have a bid before the August 23rd deadline.

**A:** Bids are not required prior to the August 23rd deadline. After the top 25-30 nonprofit buildings are selected by the Community Advisory Board later this fall and a Phase 2 energy audit is conducted, MARC will submit a portfolio of recommended buildings to the DOE. We expect a 2-week review by DOE, followed by working with the selected non-profits to execute a sub-recipient agreement with MARC and provide technical assistance as needed to prepare bid documents for the selected energy conservation improvements between late November and late January/early February. will happen in November 24th through January 25th. The selection of top projects will be based on the selection criteria including the energy assessment/energy audit to determine those improvements that could achieve the 15% savings.

**Q:** Are transitional housing shelters considered multi-unit housing buildings and thus not eligible?

**A:** In general, multi-unit housing buildings are not eligible because the individual units may have separate meters, or the occupants are the ones adjusting the temperature in their units. If the shelter has one meter set and monitored by the non-profit, it is possible that the building could be eligible.

**Q:** Are animal shelters eligible for the program?

**A:** No, only emergency shelters for people, but not animal shelters.

**Q:** Can a church apply if it does not have a 501 C3 designation?

**A:** No. Unfortunately, it's a requirement by the Department of Energy that we can only serve 501c3 organizations.

**Q:** Will we use DOE analysis software?

**A:** We are not familiar with that software. We expect to work with partner Metropolitan Energy Center to make use of the Energy Star Portfolio Manager program. The website to register to use this software is <https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov/pm/login> MEC will offer a one-hour training on the use of the Energy Star Portfolio Manager program on July 17 at 10 am and again on August 5 at 10 am. Information to register for the webinars will be posted on the MARC website.

**Q:** How do you determine that a nonprofit is able to handle federal funds?

**A:** MARC uses a risk assessment tool, like a checklist, to see if organizations are prepared to contract for, receive and utilize federal funds. We will provide you with a copy of the checklist and answer additional questions. In general, we want sub-recipients to be able to manage federal funds, accounting for their receipt and expenditure, process to approve payments to ensure fiscal responsibility, ability to bid and contract for a construction project, ability to manage a construction project, etc. If there are small nonprofits that don't have all of the necessary capacities, MARC or CCF may be willing to serve as fiscal agent.

**Q:** In addition to the resources Ashley just shared, can you discuss the relationship between this and other related grant opportunities, those that support facility improvements and GHG reduction?

**A:** some of you may have been involved or heard about a large EPA grant application that, that mark submitted in late April of this year. If it's awarded, it would be a five-year grant, and would support building energy efficiency. Ashley was very involved in that grant application. The EPA grant could be another source of funding to support nonprofit

buildings whether renewables like solar or for the more conventional energy conservation improvements that we've been discussing as part of this particular grant.- And for any eligible organization that's not able to be assisted through our grant, we'll make sure that we have you connected to that grant program. We're hoping to learn the outcome of that grant by late August. And as we learn more about the state of Missouri's Solar for All, we will be sure and share with this audience.

**Q:** Are new roofs allowable?

**A:** Yes, new roofs are allowable. Given the expense of a new roof, we will need to evaluate the cost of the improvement in relation to the return on investment in terms of energy savings. As part of the energy assessment/Level 1 energy audit, our engineers and other team members may be able to help your organization evaluate the possible costs of certain improvements such as a roof in relation to energy savings.

**Q:** Can funds be used to pay construction salaries, but not salaries of the nonprofit agency?

**A:** That is correct. Your organization, if selected, would be bidding out the work. And if, for example, a part of the work that you would desire to be accomplished would be to replace some windows that would require some construction, then the construction company that would bid on that would pay their workers' salaries. (The organization will be responsible for meeting Davis-Bacon federal requirements to collect information on worker salaries through on-site interviews).

**Q:** Will MARC pay the contractors directly or will the nonprofit agency pay the contractors and then get reimbursed by MARC.

**A:** The intention is that MARC will have an agreement with your organization. If you're selected, your organization would do the bidding and the contracting directly with the selected contractor. Your organization would be responsible for paying the contractor as you outline in your contract with the company for either progress payments or upon completion of the work. As you receive invoices from your contractor(s), you would review to make sure the work for which payment is requested has been successfully completed, and then you would submit that paperwork to MARC. Your organization would be responsible for paying the contractor for the invoice, and MARC would reimburse your organization. If you're making progress payments, you would be submitting those invoices to us, and we would be reimbursing you for those costs along the way. And then for final approval and payment, there may be an inspection that your organization and perhaps our organization might want to do together to make sure the contractor has successfully completed the work before a final payment is issued,

**Q:** Is there a scoring process for the application, or is a lot of this driven by the initial audit or both?

**A:** The selection criteria that we showed on the screen and is in a document on the MARC website describes a point system for four areas - location, need, organizational capacity and energy savings. One of the selection criteria areas is the potential for energy savings. We will be looking at the location of the building - whether it is in a disadvantaged neighborhood or community and if the building provides services to disadvantaged people in or near the neighborhood around the building location; the need for the project; the non-profit's capacity to handle the project and federal funds; and the potential to realize at least a 15% energy savings.

**Q:** What is on the checklist or the risk assessment tool to evaluate organizational and financial capacity.

**A:** MARC will share the checklist and provide it to those who participated in the webinar and post on our website.

**Q:** What if an organization has a larger capital project that includes energy conservation, could the federal funds be used for a portion of a larger capital improvement?

**A:** It is possible as long as the energy conservation improvements proposed for the DOE funds have a cost of no more than \$200,000 and can easily be accounted for separate from the other capital investments. If the timeline works for your organization and you have the funding available to you, it is possible to coordinate this grant with other funding. It will need to be clear to DOE what their funds were used to pay for and to document the energy savings that would be accomplished by those improvements.

**Comments:** If some organizations would like to undertake larger projects or if this DOE grant program has limited funding, we may spend less than \$200,000 for some building projects that would allow us to provide assistance to more nonprofits.

**Comments:** Andrew Davis with Community Capital Fund mentioned the requirement that non-profits must be a 501c3 organization and the building to be improved must be owned by that 501c3 organization. There are two maps to show the Justice 40/Environmental Justice census tracts. [environmental-justice-tracts-map \(marc.org\)](https://environmental-justice-tracts-map(marc.org)) or <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>

Andrew offered to help answer questions ([andrew@ccfkansascity.org](mailto:andrew@ccfkansascity.org))

If anyone has questions, you mail email one of us - MARC staff:

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We want to clarify that the energy audits will be conducted after the applications are submitted by August 23, 2024. If your organization has a recent energy assessment or energy audit completed within the last 5 years, please upload with your application.

For those buildings in the service area for Evergy, they offer an energy assessment service for small businesses and nonprofits and have agreed to assist us with some of our energy assessments.

**Comment:** One of the advantages of the program is even though 25 to 30 will be chosen as the final grant awardees, the process of going through an energy assessment or Level 1 energy audit will give you a roadmap for some energy improvements that you can make. So hopefully beyond just the 25 or 30 that are awarded you will get value in going through the application process. You might be able to share that information with other funders or take steps on those projects that could help you achieve the greatest energy savings.