

Renew America's Nonprofits - Sustainable Westchester

Frequently Asked Questions

General Grant Questions

1. What is the Renewing America's Nonprofits grant program?

The Renewing America's Nonprofits grant program is an initiative aimed at supporting 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in New York State. It provides funding of up to \$200,00 to help nonprofits reduce their energy use and costs through innovative decarbonization projects.

2. Who is eligible to apply for the grant?

501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in NYS that own their own building and are seeking funding to increase the energy efficiency of their building are eligible to apply. Organizations seeking to check their eligibility before completing a full application may submit the required portion of the application only located [here](#).

3. What types of buildings are eligible to receive funding from the RAN grant? If our organization rents/leases our building, are we eligible to apply?

BIL Section SEC. 40542(a)(3) specifies: "The term "nonprofit building" means a building operated and owned by an organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code." Buildings must be **owned** and operated by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to be eligible for funding under the RAN grant.

4. Our building is co-owned with another nonprofit. Is it possible for both entities to apply for funds to cover an eligible project?

One application should be submitted per building.

5. What types of projects are funded by the grant?

The program funds projects that reduce the energy use of the building. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Insulation or building envelope improvements
- HVAC upgrades to existing system

- New clean heating and cooling HVAC systems (air or ground source heat pumps)
- Energy efficient lighting
- Weather sealing and duct sealing
- Energy efficient appliances and equipment
- Windows and doors retrofit and replacement
- Roof repair or replacement with insulation
- Electrical system upgrades

6. What types of projects cannot be funded by the grant?

- Alternative transportation (EV Charging, bike racks)
- Renewable Energy (solar panels/windmills)
- Water conservation measures
- Recycling/waste reduction

Please note that the listed (i.e. solar panels, etc.) can be part of the building's *overall project*, the RAN grant money just cannot be used to fund that portion of the project.

7. How do I apply for the grant?

Interested organizations can apply through the program's [official website](#). If you would like to view the full application before filling in the required information on Jotform, please see the pdf version [here](#). For your application to be considered, it must be submitted through Jotform. Please be sure to press submit at the end of the application.

8. How many nonprofit organizations will win this grant?

25 to 32 eligible NYS 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

9. Do I have to fill out all the questions of the application to know if I am eligible?

No, to determine if you're an eligible applicant only the first 2 pages with questions indicated with a red asterisk are required to be completed. Failure to complete the first 2 pages in full will result in an invalid application. You must press submit in order for us to review your application.

PLEASE NOTE: Filling out and submitting only the first two pages of the application is to be used as a tool to check if your organization is [eligible](#). A member of Sustainable Westchester will contact you to assist with next steps if you need help with the rest of the application. Applications will be scored based on the responses to the remaining questions on pages 3-8. Filling out the application to the best of your ability is in your best interest and Sustainable Westchester is happy to guide you in doing so.

10. Can we save an application that was started and return later to finish it and submit it?

Yes, at the bottom of each page of the application there is a save button. You do not have to make a JotForm account to save a draft of your application, simply click on "Skip Create an Account" at the bottom of the popup. A draft of your application will be sent to the email you provide and you can continue your application from the link the email provides. After submitting your application you can also go back and edit your application for resubmission, i.e. the scored portion of your application can be filled in after first submitting to confirm eligibility.

11. Can the Renew America's Nonprofit Grant be stacked with the BUILT Nonprofits grant?

No. Nonprofits who are recipients or subrecipients on the 2023 Renew America's Nonprofits Grant cannot stack with the BUILT Nonprofits Grant.

12. How would I know what actions to take to decarbonize my nonprofit building?

We encourage all applicants to get an energy study done through Green Jobs Green New York if they have not had an energy audit done on their building before. Nonprofits are eligible to get an energy study done with a \$100, \$250, or \$500 cost share through the [NYSERDA Green Jobs Green New York](#) program. Nonprofit buildings <50,000 sq. ft. are eligible. For buildings above this size limit or for financial assistance with the cost share for the study please contact us at building-decarbonization@sustainablewestchester.org.

13. How do I register for the webinar?

You can register for our upcoming webinar at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/sustainable-westchester-inc/renew-america-s-nonprofits-webinar-february>. If needed, you can refer to this [document](#) for instructions on how to register for the next Webinar.

14. Is there a cost share requirement?

The cost share requirement is 20%.

15. Do we need to understand and consider the SHPO consultation and NEPA review prior to applying, or will we get guidance on if/what is required and how to navigate if we're selected?

More guidance on how to navigate NEPA review and any SHPO consultations will be provided once selected.

16. What should I do if I have additional questions?

You may contact building-decarbonization@sustainablewestchester.org at any time and a member of our team will reply to you.

Application Scoring Questions

1. Where can I find the scoring criteria for the application?

The scoring criteria for applications can be found [here](#). Examples are provided in the scorecard of what would earn full points on an application.

2. How do I know if my decarbonization project will benefit a disadvantaged or climate vulnerable community?

Please refer to this [document](#) for “Indicators Considered to Represent Environmental Burdens and Climate Change Risks,” located on page 58 of the pdf.

3. What is a Justice40 community? Should I still apply even if my nonprofit is not located in a J40 census tract or serve DACs?

The Justice40 Initiative directs 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments – including investments in clean energy and energy efficiency; clean transit; affordable and sustainable housing; training and workforce development; the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution; and the development of clean water infrastructure – to flow to disadvantaged communities (DACs). For more information, visit: <https://www.energy.gov/justice/justice40-initiative> .

Although applications for buildings located in a federally designated disadvantaged community or for organizations primarily serving members of a disadvantaged community will be more competitive, all are still encouraged to apply. To identify if your building is located in a disadvantaged community, use the mapping tool located [here](#) and enter your building’s address.

4. How can I find Minority/Women Owned Businesses (M/WBE) to use for my project? Does this make me a better applicant?

Applications which include a plan to utilize the State's Minority/Women Owned Business vendor list and prioritize diversity hiring and union labor to the best extent possible will be scored highly. You can verify if the contractor you plan to use is a certified M/WBE by using the NYS M/WBE Directory [here](#). A vetted vendor M/WBE list by Sustainable Westchester will be made available to you in January 2025.