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. **I have a UEI ID, but not a SAM.gov account, am I eligible?**

   To be an eligible applicant, an organization must provide us with an active SAM.gov registration and UEI number. A SAM.gov account must be associated with your organization's UEI number to be valid. If your organization's UEI ID shows no expiration date, the most likely reason for this is a missing SAM.gov account associated with the ID number. This requirement is shared across all federal grants.

6. 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

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. How many nonprofit organizations will win this grant?

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

10. Is an energy study/audit required for the application?

No, an energy study/audit is NOT required, but it is a scoring item. Please refer to the RAN webpage for building energy analysis tools.

11. 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 (required 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 the green submit button on the last page of the application 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

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

We are now recommending nonprofits to use the BETTER Report tool. This report provides multiple energy analysis models and suggestions for building energy improvements. To generate a BETTER report please prepare 12 months worth of utility bills and enter the exact sq. footage of the building. Please note: Report analytics are currently only supported for schools, multifamily, office, and library buildings. Please choose one of these building types to run the report.

The BETTER tool mentioned can be used to fulfill points for the scorecard section "Quantitative Factors and Use of Available Resources." For nonprofits with more than one building the **EnergyStar Portfolio Manager** can help identify which building is the worst performer.

15. Is there a cost share requirement? Does it have to come directly from the nonprofit?

The cost share requirement is 20%. No, it does not need to be paid directly from the nonprofit, the 20% cost share only has to **not be from a federal source.**

16. 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.

17. When will the winners of this grant be announced?

There will be a public announcement made in September 2025.

18. 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 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).

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. You can also use these searchable databases listed on this document: https://sustainablewestchester.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/How-to-Find-a-Preferred-Vendor.pdf

5. When can I expect to hear back about my application? What is the timeline for scoring and announcements?

May - July 2025: Selection Committee reviews applications using the scorecard provided during the application period.

As of October 17, 2025, Sustainable Westchester does not have a clear timeline for the Department of Energy's (DOE) review and approval of our proposed subrecipients.

Sustainable Westchester's work on the Renew America's Nonprofits grant cannot resume until the DOE approves the finalists. Sustainable Westchester will continue to follow up with the DOE with requests for updates until we receive definitive answers.

We sincerely appreciate your understanding, and will be sure to keep you informed of any developments as soon as they are available.

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