



Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) FY24 Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program (Solar and Geothermal)

This FOA contains the Terms and Conditions for the [Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program](#).

Program

Description: The Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program provides rebates for the installation of certain types of new clean energy systems. This FOA addresses solar (i.e., photovoltaic and thermal) and geothermal technologies.

Program

Regulations: Regulations governing the Clean Energy Rebate Program (formerly known as the Clean Energy Grant Program) can be viewed in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), section 14.26.04. In the event of a conflict between the regulations and this FOA, or other program documents, the regulations overrule the FOA.

**REQUIRED USE OF FY24 APPLICATION

FORM: Beginning on **September 1, 2023**, eligible applicants to the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program **must use the most up-to-date application form for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) provided by MEA on the [Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program webpage](#)¹**, or, if filling out an electronic application (“eApp”), **must use the most up-to-date Applicant Signature Sheet provided by the eApp online application portal. MEA WILL NOT CONSIDER APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED ON OUTDATED APPLICATION FORMS OR eApp SIGNATURE SHEETS ON OR AFTER SEPTEMBER 1, 2023.**

Type of Rebate

Program: Rebates are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis for complete and eligible applications.

Application Deadline: Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis, **beginning on July 13, 2023**, and throughout the State of Maryland fiscal year (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024);

¹ <https://energy.maryland.gov/residential/Pages/incentives/CleanEnergyGrants.aspx>

however, issuance of a rebate by MEA cannot be assured if the Program Budget has been exhausted.

Eligible Applicants: A Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program applicant is eligible if they are “an owner of a residential property that is (a) located in the State; and (b) the primary residence of the owner of the residential property at the time of application”.²

Eligible Technologies: The Program provides rebates for the installation of new solar photovoltaic (PV) (i.e., panel and shingle installations), solar thermal, or geothermal systems (the “project”) by eligible applicants.

- To be eligible, the installed technology must comply with the defined capacity limits outlined in the Award Formula section below.
- Geothermal systems include the installation of deep wells, shallow loops, standing water columns, or open pond systems and a ground source heat pump. **The replacement, in part or its entirety, of a pre-existing geothermal heat pump system is ineligible for award.**

Anticipated Program

Budget: **\$4,600,000** is available from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to fund all residential programs designated under the Clean Energy Rebate Program for FY24. Issuance of a rebate by MEA cannot be assured if the Program Budget has been exhausted.

Funding is **not** guaranteed for any application.

Program Minimum

Criteria: To be eligible for an award, an application must meet the following minimum criteria:

- the home is located in Maryland;
- the Applicant owns the home;
- the home is the primary residence of the applicant at the time of application;
- the home is not owned by an irrevocable trust;
- the clean energy system meets the minimum system size criteria;
- all required permits have been issued from the Authority Having Jurisdiction (typically the city or county);
- if applicable, all permitting inspections have been satisfactorily passed and documented;
- for a solar photovoltaic system, the utility has issued a “Permission to Operate” certificate;
- the system has been documented as being paid in full;
- photographic documentation showing the installed clean energy system has been provided;

² As outlined in COMAR 14.26.04.05.

- the application is complete, signed, dated, and contains the homeowner applicant’s federal tax identification number;
- the application is submitted within 12 months from the date the system was installed^{3,4}; and,
- if a solar photovoltaic (PV) project, a NABCEP-certified PV Installation Professional has been involved in the design or installation of the solar system.

Review Process: Subject to Program funding availability, applications will be reviewed in the following manner:

- Upon receipt, each application is reviewed for completeness.
 - If an application was submitted using the online web portal (<https://egov.maryland.gov/mea/CleanEnergy/>), the application is not considered complete until the required signature sheet that is generated and emailed to the Applicant at the end of the web portal process is signed, sent, and received by MEA.
- Complete applications are reviewed, and if found to satisfy Program criteria, the application is submitted for approval and payment, subject to the availability of funding within the Program.

Award Formula: The following clean energy system incentives are available through the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program for eligible applications.

Clean Energy Technology	Eligible System Capacity Range	Rebate Amount
Solar Photovoltaic (PV)	Minimum 1 kW-DC	\$1,000
Solar Shingles	Minimum 1 kW-DC	\$1,000
Solar Water Heating (SWH)	Minimum 10 sq. ft.	\$500
Geothermal (ground source heat pump + well field/loops/water column)*	Minimum 1 ton	\$3,000

*The replacement of a pre-existing geothermal heat pump system is **ineligible** for award.

Partial awards: Partial awards will not be offered under the Program.

Required Application

Documents: Required application documents are listed below. In addition to these documents, MEA may require additional documentation (e.g., a Permission to Operate certificate from the utility) to demonstrate compliance with any program requirements.

Applications that are submitted exclusively in a paper format (i.e., not through the CERP online application portal at <https://egov.maryland.gov/mea/CleanEnergy/>) shall include the following documents to be considered complete:

³ The date of installation is the latest of the following dates: the system is paid in full; the system passes its final inspection, the system receives Permission to Operate from the utility, or system construction is complete.

⁴ The Program Manager may waive this requirement for what is deemed to be good cause.

- the signed and dated paper application;
- an [IRS W-9 form](#)⁵ (**Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification**);
- documentation showing passed final inspection for all permits required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction;
- documentation showing the project has been paid for in full;
- photographic documentation showing the installed clean energy system; and,
- documentation showing property ownership and primary residency at the time of application.

Applications submitted via the electronic portal

(<https://egov.maryland.gov/mea/CleanEnergy/>) shall include the following documents:

- documentation showing passed final inspection for all permits required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction;
- documentation showing the project has been paid for in full;
- photographic documentation showing the installed system; and,
- documentation showing property ownership and primary residency at the time of application.

Before an application submitted via the electronic portal is considered complete, the applicant must provide MEA with a signed, complete signature sheet and a signed, completed IRS W9 form. Both the signature sheet and the IRS W9 form will be electronically sent to the applicant after the electronic portal receives the application). Both of these documents need to be sent back to MEA via either 1) the physical mail or 2) through a Virtru-enabled email link before the application is considered to be complete. **W9 forms should NOT be submitted through the online application portal, or through email that is not encrypted via Virtru, as they contain personally identifiable information.**

Note: If documentation showing property ownership and primary residency is not provided, as a courtesy MEA may try to find this information using the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) Real Property Database (<https://sd.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>) to enable the application review to proceed. If the SDAT information does not show property ownership and primary residency information that matches the information on the application, MEA will not be able to process the application until the applicant provides the necessary documentation.

If photos are not provided, as a courtesy MEA may try to find the necessary photo documentation using Google Earth. If the necessary photo documentation cannot be obtained in this way, MEA will not be able to process the application until the applicant provides the necessary photographs.

If permit documentation is not provided, as a courtesy MEA may try to find necessary permit documentation using online records. If the necessary permit information cannot be obtained in this way,

⁵ <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-9>

MEA will not be able to process the application until the applicant provides the necessary permit information.

MEA may require the applicant to provide a copy of the signed Permission to Operate document from the local utility company.

In all cases, the applicant is responsible for providing required documentation. Failure to provide required documentation within the requested timeframe is grounds for MEA to cancel the application.

Submission

Instructions: MEA encourages the use of the “[Online E-Application Portal](https://energy.maryland.gov/residential/Pages/incentives/CleanEnergyGrants.aspx)” that can be found on the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program website for solar PV, solar thermal, and new geothermal systems.⁶ **As the portal does not have the capability to allow an applicant to save data, ensure all required supporting documents are in electronic form (.pdf, .jpeg, .docx, .xlsx, etc.) and ready to be uploaded before starting an Online E-Application.**

Alternatively, a paper version of the Program application can be downloaded and printed from <https://energy.maryland.gov/residential/Pages/incentives/CleanEnergyGrants.aspx>. After completing and signing the document, the complete application (to include all supporting documents) should be mailed to MEA at the following address:

Maryland Energy Administration
Attn: Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program
1800 Washington Blvd. Suite 755
Baltimore, MD 21230

Once MEA has received an application, the applicant can track the application receipt and status by checking the Residential CERP Weekly Status Report on the Program website, which is typically updated once per week.

Additional requirements

1. Eligible Properties: Property Requirements

A. The property on which the clean energy system is installed must serve as the primary residence of the Rebate Applicant⁷, and the Rebate Applicant must be listed as an owner of the property.

⁶ See: <https://energy.maryland.gov/residential/Pages/incentives/CleanEnergyGrants.aspx>

⁷ See COMAR 14.26.04.06.A.1.

B. A property held in trust is not eligible for a Residential Clean Energy Rebate unless the property is the primary residence of a grantor of a revocable trust who has the right to revoke the trust.⁸ A property owned by an irrevocable trust is not eligible for a Residential Clean Energy Rebate.

C. A second home, rental home, or recreational property is not eligible for a Residential Clean Energy Rebate.⁹ Examples of a “recreational property” include recreational vehicles (RVs) and boats.

D. A Residential Clean Energy Rebate may be issued to a property which is leased by the rebate Applicant only if the property owner is an eligible co-applicant.

E. A property owned by a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), where the only member of the LLC is the applicant (or the applicant and spouse), is also eligible for a rebate.

F. A property that is used for both a residence and a business will be considered by MEA based on the “Use” field listed in the [Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Real Property Data Search](#)¹⁰.

- For any property with a residential “use”, the application will be considered under the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program.
- For any property with a non-residential “use”, the applicant may have to apply under the Commercial Clean Energy Rebate Program.

G. If an applicant owns their home (i.e., the building) but leases the ground where the home is located, the applicant is ineligible for an award for a ground-mounted solar PV, ground-mounted solar hot water system, or a geothermal system, but remains eligible for a roof mounted solar PV or solar hot water system.

H. Residential Clean Energy Rebates are limited to one Rebate per qualifying clean energy technology per property.

- If the capacity of a clean energy system that already received a grant or rebate is increased, an additional Residential Clean Energy Rebate will not be issued to the system for the increase in capacity.
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) is considered to be the same technology as Solar Shingles.

I. MEA does not typically refer residential projects to the Maryland Historical Trust for review; however, if required, applicants must obtain permission for a project from all local historic preservation commissions with authority over the project. MEA may deny an application if the project results in an adverse effect on a historic property.

J. **New Construction Restriction:** A Clean Energy Rebate for an eligible clean energy system can only be issued to a single-family home that serves as the primary residence of the applicant that purchases the system and can provide evidence that they have paid the balance for the system in full with either a (1) zero-balance invoice; (2) documentation that financing was obtained to satisfy the balance of the system; or (3) other documentation that can only be approved by MEA on a case-by-case basis.

Continued

⁸ See COMAR 14.26.04.06(B)(2).

⁹ See COMAR 14.26.04.06(B)(3).

¹⁰ <https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>

2. Eligible Systems/Technologies: Clean Energy Technology Requirements

A. Solar Photovoltaic (“PV”) Systems - Solar Photovoltaic systems must be installed and operated in compliance with the requirements of the local building codes and the following national safety certification systems:

(1) Underwriters Laboratories (UL) - Solar PV system hardware must be in compliance with all applicable performance and safety standards, including UL 1741, Standard for Inverters, Converters, Controllers, and Interconnection System Equipment for Use with Distributed Energy Resources, and UL 1703, Standard for Flat-Plate Photovoltaic Modules and Panels.

(2) Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) - Solar PV systems must meet the requirements of IEEE 1547, Standard for Interconnecting Distributed Resources with Electric Power Systems with applicable requirements of local electrical codes and the National Electric Code (NEC).

B. Geothermal Heat Pumps - Geothermal Heat Pumps must meet the ENERGY STAR standards specified on the ENERGY STAR website.

A list of ENERGY STAR geothermal heat pumps can be found at

<https://www.energystar.gov/productfinder/product/certified-geothermal-heat-pumps/results>

C. Solar Water Heating (SWH) Systems - Solar Water Heating (SWH) Systems must meet the requirements of the local codes and possess the Solar Rating and Certification Corporation OG-100 Certification, as specified in the following website:

<https://codes.ICCSafe.org/content/ICC9012015/toc>

A list of qualified systems can be found at: <https://secure.solar-rating.org/Certification/Ratings/RatingsSummaryPage.aspx?type=1>

3. Eligible System Installers (Contractors)

A. Maryland Authorized Business - Any contractor installing a clean energy system for which a rebate is sought under this Program must be incorporated or [registered to do business in the State of Maryland](#)¹¹; possess all licenses and certifications required by all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations for the work being performed; and be in good standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation.

- Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC) - A MHIC license is required to install solar panels for a homeowner.¹²
- A licensed master electrician is required to connect solar panels to an electric system.¹³

¹¹ <https://egov.maryland.gov/businessexpress/entitysearch>

¹² <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/mhic/mhicfaq.shtml>

¹³ <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/mhic/mhicfaq.shtml>

B. North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) - Solar PV installation contractors with a staff of 49 or fewer individuals must maintain at least one staff member who possesses a NABCEP PV Installation Professional (PVIP) Certification. Solar PV installation contractors with a staff of 50 or more individuals must maintain one staff member who possesses a NABCEP PV Installation Professional Certification for every 25 non-administrative employees. Solar PV installation contractors that have been registered to do business in the State of Maryland less than 12 months prior to the submission of a Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application are exempt from this requirement.

D. Self-Installations – Projects that are self-installed are not eligible for residential clean energy rebates, with the exception of solar PV projects that are self-installed by individuals who hold a NABCEP PV Installation Professional Certification AND are a Master Electrician licensed to work in Maryland.

4. Application Requirements

A. Eligible Application - An application to the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Program is considered eligible if it is submitted by an Eligible Applicant for an Eligible Technology, and meets the Program Minimum Criteria and Additional Requirements, as well as includes the Required Application Documents, outlined in this FOA.

B. Application Timeframe - A Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application shall be submitted to MEA only after the clean energy system has been installed, paid in full, and has passed all final inspections required by the County or local permitting authority and received Permission to Operate from the local electric utility. Applications received for incomplete systems will not be considered.

C. Application Deadline - A Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application must be submitted to MEA no more than twelve (12) months from the latest of the following dates: the date that the clean energy system is installed, paid in full, passed all final inspections required by the County or local permitting authority, or received Permission to Operate from the local utility. This date is considered the Project End Date and should be entered on the application as such. With good cause and at its sole discretion, MEA may grant an extension of the twelve-month deadline on a case-by-case basis upon reviewing justification provided by the applicant in writing.

D. Supporting Documentation - The following attachments must be included with the Residential Clean Energy Rebate Application and meet the specified requirements:

(1) Final Inspection Documentation - Documentation of passed final inspections for all permits required by the County or local permitting authority must be provided. Acceptable documentation includes photos or copies of final inspection stickers, copies of inspection reports, copies of certificates of use and occupancy, and printouts from online permit inquiry systems provided by County or local permitting authorities. The applicant is responsible for contacting the County or local permitting office for the jurisdiction in which the applicant resides to obtain permitting requirements.

(2) Payment Documentation - Documentation that the clean energy system has been paid-in-full by the applicant must be provided. Typical documentation is in the form of \$0.00 balance itemized invoices from installation contractors and vendors.

- If a \$0.00 balance itemized invoice is not available, MEA will accept receipts or letters from installation contractors and vendors indicating a \$0.00 balance, with itemized proposals.
- For system purchases that are financed (but not leased) through the company that is also installing the system, a "payment-in-full" document is still required from the installation arm of the installing company. A loan from the finance arm of the installer (or other financial institution) is considered a separate transaction and does not negate a "payment in full" document from the installer.

(3) Photo Documentation of the Clean Energy System - Photo documentation of the completed clean energy system must be provided. Please see the list below for photo requirements for each clean energy technology:

(a) Solar PV Systems: Photos of all panels in the system and the inverters (unless the system utilizes microinverters) must be provided. Include photos of the system as seen from the street(s) side of the home.

(b) Geothermal Systems: Photos of the heat exchanger(s), air distribution system, and outdoor location of the ground/pond loops must be provided.

(c) Solar Water Heating (SWH) Systems: Photos of the collectors and hot water tank(s) must be provided. Include photos of the system as seen from the street(s) side of the home.

(4) Property Ownership and Primary Residence Documentation - For this Program, property ownership and primary residence are initially determined using the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) Real Property database. To enable this review, an applicant should provide a [screenshot or copy of the SDAT Real Property Data](#) information indicating that the Rebate Applicant is a listed property owner and that the property is the applicant's primary residence.^{14,15}

(a) If the property is the Rebate Applicant's primary residence, but the SDAT Real Property Data information currently indicates that the property is not the Applicant's primary residence, a copy of the Rebate Applicant's Maryland driver's license/photo ID or Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) change of address card listing the installation property as the Applicant's residence may be provided to document primary residency at the property. **For security reasons, Rebate Applicants should redact social security numbers, driver's license numbers, and dates of birth before submission of copies of photo identification to MEA.**

(b) If a Rebate Applicant is the property owner, but the Real Property Data information does not list the Rebate Applicant as a property owner, MEA will determine an acceptable method for the applicant to document ownership. **For security reasons, Rebate Applicants**

¹⁴ <https://sdat.dat.maryland.gov/RealProperty/Pages/default.aspx>

¹⁵ The SDAT Real Property Data form is not the same as a Real Property Tax bill.

should redact social security numbers, driver's license numbers, and dates of birth before submission of copies of photo identification to MEA.

(c) Active-Duty Military Service - If a Rebate Applicant is a member of the military on active-duty status who owns a residential property in the State of Maryland that serves as the Rebate Applicant's primary residence, but whose permanent residence is located within another state, the applicant is eligible for a Clean Energy Rebate Program rebate. The Rebate Applicant must provide a copy of the Real Property Data information indicating ownership of the property (or alternative ownership documentation determined by MEA on a case-by-case basis if the Real Property Data form does not list the Rebate Applicant as a property owner), a copy of the Rebate Applicant's military ID, a copy of the Rebate Applicant's driver's license, and a copy of a utility bill for the property. If a spouse or other property resident is listed on the utility bill, alternative documentation will be determined by MEA on a case-by-case basis. **For security reasons, Rebate Applicants should redact social security numbers, Department of Defense (DoD) ID numbers, driver's license numbers, and dates of birth before submission of copies of photo identification to MEA.**

(5) Complete, accurate, and signed IRS Form W9 (NEW REQUIREMENT) – An applicant must submit a complete, accurate, and signed copy of the [IRS Form W9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#)¹⁶ with their Residential Clean Energy Rebate application. **If using the electronic application portal, do not upload a copy of the IRS Form W9, as it contains sensitive information. An electronically-submitted IRS Form W9 must be provided only through a Virtru-enabled email link that will be provided by MEA to the Residential Clean Energy Rebate applicant.**

E. ****MISSING INFORMATION POLICY****

- If required information or attachments are missing from a Residential Clean Energy Rebate application, or the application or attachments present information which requires further clarification, MEA will notify the Rebate Applicant in writing.
- If a response from the Rebate Applicant or the Applicant's Installation Contractor is not received within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date on the MEA correspondence, MEA may cancel the rebate application.
- Rebate Applicants may appeal an application cancellation by submitting an email to CERP.MEA@Maryland.gov that provides a summary of the reasons for which an appeal is requested no more than thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the cancellation. MEA may, at its sole discretion, choose to reopen the application or uphold the cancellation. There is no guarantee that a canceled application will be reopened.
- Rebate Applicants whose applications are canceled for lack of response may reapply, provided the new application is submitted within twelve (12) months of the Project End Date.

¹⁶ <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-w-9>

5. Use of Personal Information

In accordance with Section 4-501(c)(3) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, MEA is required to advise Applicants of the following:

- A. The information being requested by the Application is necessary to document the completion of the project and to ensure installation of a qualifying system.
- B. Failure to provide all required information will result in cancellation of a Rebate application.
- C. Upon submission for payment, some of this information will be provided to other State agencies to process the payment of the rebate.
- D. The applicant's or rebate recipient's name, project information (e.g., technology, system capacity) and rebate request status may be publicly accessible on our website.
- E. Unless otherwise provided by law or court order, portions of the information provided by an applicant may be subject to disclosure upon request for inspection under Maryland's Public Information Act. To the extent permitted by law, personal information will not be disclosed except for the purpose of processing a rebate application.
- F. As set forth in Section 4-502 of the General Provisions Article, an applicant has the right to inspect, amend, or correct a personal record as maintained by the Clean Energy Rebate Program.

6. Tax Status of Residential Clean Energy Rebates

MEA does not provide tax information or tax advice. Questions should be directed to a qualified tax professional.

7. IRS W-9 Forms Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification

- **The applicant name listed on the W-9 form should be the same as how the applicant's name would be listed on an income tax return (i.e., no nicknames or abbreviations). The name on the application should also be identical to the name on the W-9 form being submitted with the application.**
 - In the event of a variation between the application and a W9 form, or the W9 and the state's financial system, MEA may need to ask the applicant to resubmit an updated W9 form or additional supporting documentation verifying identity (e.g., a copy of the applicant's driver's license).
- If the applicant requests that a rebate be mailed to an address that is different from the installation address of the primary residence (e.g., mailed to a P.O. Box):
 - the rebate applicant must use the paper application process; and,

- the applicant must also submit an [IRS W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification form](#)¹⁷ with the application. The name, mailing address, and the taxpayer identification number on the W-9 must be identical to the information on the application.
- Failure to submit a W-9 within the requested time frame will result in MEA canceling the application.

Additional Information: For information concerning a rebate application, contact an MEA Energy Specialist by email at corp.mea@maryland.gov or by phone at 410-537-4000.

Program specific questions may be directed to:

David Comis, Energy Program Manager
David.Comis@Maryland.gov
410-537-4064

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¹⁷ <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>