

Energy Retrofits for Public Buildings: SPI 2021 Q&A

Submit all questions to the RFA Coordinator at energyretrofits@commerce.wa.gov. Commerce will post answers periodically on the website.

Questions Received through October 4, 2021

- 1) Q: Does this mean that potential projects are limited to within the confines of a single building? i.e. a "site" is defined as the footprint of a single building?**

A: No, a site can include multiple buildings that are adjacent or within one campus. However, the proposed projects should be similar scopes of work. For example, you may submit an application to replace HVAC systems at two buildings on a campus with similar equipment, but you should submit two applications to replace an HVAC system in one building and a lighting system in another building. Additionally, you may only include one stand-alone or minor works project per application.

- 2) Q: Is an owner limited to one application per building? Or can they submit multiple applications per building? Is an owner limited to one application per campus? Or can they submit multiple applications per campus?**

A: You may submit multiple applications per building or per campus. Do not duplicate baseline project funding on different applications.

- 3) Has the eligibility of Colleges and Universities to apply for this grant changed since the last round? I believe colleges and universities receive their funding through OFM- does that then make them eligible? It is a little confusing when reading executive order 20-01 – Calcification on their eligibility for this grant would be appreciated. If they are no longer eligible- what changed from the last legislative cycle to this one in terms of legislative language that may now exclude these folks from applying?**

A: Colleges and Universities are generally not "SEEP Agencies" and are no longer eligible. The proviso language specifies "...projects at facilities owned by agencies named by the state efficiency and environmental performance office executive order 20-01..." which is a change from the previous biennium.

Executive Order 20-01 names the following agencies: "Department of Social and Health Services, WSDOT, Department of Corrections, DES, ECY, the Washington State Patrol, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Labor & Industries, the Department of Health, the Liquor and Cannabis Board and the Department of Children, Youth, and Family Services. The Washington State Department of Agriculture, Office

of Financial Management and Department of Commerce shall be included because of their key roles in implementation."

- 4) Q: We successfully completed an SPI grant project last biennium and were hoping to apply for a similar project this time around. While reviewing your website, I noticed that applicants must be a state agency named by the SEEP executive order 20-01. I do not see Washington State University listed in the SEEP 20-01 document and therefore would like to ask you to confirm that whether or not we are eligible to apply for an SPI grant this time around?**

A: No Washington State University is not eligible. See question 3.

- 5) Q: Is there any way that the State Community Colleges could be eligible for the SPI grant? Can DES apply for the SPI grant since DES does the contracting for the projects?**

A: See question 3. Facilities must be owned by the SEEP Agency, so DES may not apply on behalf of a college that owns the building, only facilities owned by DES are included.

- 6) Q: Can higher ed institution compete for SPI grant submittal phase 1 due 10/20?**

A: See question 3.

- 7) Q: Would the program from executive order 20-01 Energy Retrofits and Public buildings SPI grant program apply to the Northwest Indian College? We are not a State agency or State building. We are an independent 501(c)(3) Tribal College. Can we apply for this to replace temporary modular buildings with permanent buildings? Or use this to install solar panels on existing buildings?**

A: Applicants must be state agencies named in Executive Order 20-01 and must own the facilities, so Northwest Indian College is not eligible. Please see other [Energy Retrofits for Public Buildings](#) grant programs and [Clean Energy Fund](#) programs for possible funding opportunities.

- 8) Q: Will the pre-application conference be recorded for those not able to attend the October 5th session?**

A: Yes, the session will be recorded and posted on the program website.

Questions Received at the Pre-application Conference October 5, 2021

- 9) Q: If we have a project in the works using Agency funds, we would not qualify for this grant?**

A: The project must be funded in the capital or transportation budgets. Agency funds may be used in addition to capital or transportation funds.

- 10) Q: Can you clarify whether facilities owned by DES but not occupied by DES are eligible to apply for the SPI grant? RCW 43.82.010 states that the DES has the right to buy, lease, sell, or otherwise acquire property for an agency. It is often referred to as the State's landlord. All of GA's powers, duties, functions and assets were transferred to DES in RCW 43.19.900. It would seem that the SPI grant is intended to retrofit public buildings and, as such, community college buildings would qualify?**

A: The applicant must be a SEEP agency, the agency that owns the building, and also the agency who received capital budget funding for the baseline project.

11) Q: Can you please clarify that the 'alternative project cost' is the cost of the full project not just the difference between the 'baseline' and 'alternative'?

A: Yes, the alternative project cost is the full project cost including the baseline. However, if you entered the difference, the project would not be disqualified.

12) Q: Could you please share a list of Highly Impacted Communities?

A: You can download a list of the Highly Impacted Communities from the [Department of Health](#). You may also enter an address in the [Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) to see the rank of the census tract where your project is located (Highly Impacted Communities have a rank of 9 or 10).

13) Q: The 2019 SPI grants allowed for Higher Ed (Community Colleges, Technical Colleges, and Universities) to apply. As I read this year's SPI grants, I see that applicants must be a state agency named by the SEEP office. I didn't see higher ed like in years past. Is Higher Ed, as defined above, applicable to these SPI grants?

A: See Question 3.

14) Q: Are public schools districts eligible?

A: Public school districts that are not a state agency are not eligible.

15) Q: I wanted to verify if state K-12 is not a SEEP.

A: See question 3. Applicants must be agencies on the list quoted above; if you are still unsure, please send more information about your agency.

16) Q: What if the project is funded by the capital budget and has started design, can we still submit?

A: The baseline project may be in design and even under contract. If the alternative project is in design, you may still apply for a SPI grant if you exclude any design work that is under contract from the alternative project budget. The construction portion of the alternative project should not be under contract until the grantee sends Commerce the signed award letter (expected in February 2022).

17) Q: What about a lighting upgrade to LEDs that we requested in the capital budget but was not funded?

A: The baseline project must have at least some funding from the capital (or transportation) budget.

18) Q: Will the same exclusions of public higher ed and K-12 for SPI grants be applicable to the energy efficiency and solar grants too?

A: The proviso language for the Energy Retrofits and public buildings Energy Efficiency and Solar grants does not include the limitation to SEEP agencies. We expect to publish the RFA for these programs in early 2022, with additional details available as soon as December.

19) Q: How about if we are replacing a fluid cooler as the baseline project but make the alternative project replacing the downstream units to Heat Pumps?

A: We cannot confirm eligibility of specific projects through the Q&A process, but we encourage this applicant to submit a Phase I application with the technical details. As stated in RFA Section 1.3, the alternative project is an alternative design, component, or enhanced feature directly relating to the baseline project. Alternative projects must be directly related to the systems altered in the baseline project.

Questions received through October 11, 2021

20) Q: I have a building owned by the Dept of Transportation. I assume they are eligible to apply but are not listed in the SEEP Executive Order under Agencies Covered. Section 2.b.

A: WSDOT is listed in Section 2.b of Executive Order 20-01. See Question 3.

Questions received through October 14, 2021

21) Q: Can we use a quote from two years ago for a project, since we do not have current estimates for a boiler project?

A: For Phase I applications, initial estimates based on the available information is sufficient. An older quote could be used, and you could consider adding escalation or updating costs based on recent experience, if available. Unsupported cost estimates in Phase I will not result in disqualification, and you may change cost estimates between the Phase I and Phase II application. All projects will be re-evaluated in Phase II to ensure they meet minimum qualifications around funding.

Questions received through October 21, 2021

22) Q: Where do funds need to come from for the Emergency funds? Right now we are taking funds out of there (minor works) because OFM won't give us money since it is so early in the biennium, but this was never budgeted for. We had to bump other projects off the list to fix this.

A: Group 1: Emergency Repair Projects must receive funding from OFM's Emergency Repair pool for their baseline project. If a project is receiving minor works funding, even if it could qualify for emergency funding, it must be submitted as a Group 2 or Group 3 application, in order to provide the appropriate information for our review. Please note, SPI does not have separate funds for Emergency Repair projects, we have just outlined a different process to apply for these projects.

Submit all questions to the RFA Coordinator at energyretrofits@commerce.wa.gov. Commerce will post answers periodically on the website. If you are experiencing technical issues with ZoomGrants, please review ZoomGrants help or email Questions@ZoomGrants.com.