Energy Office Mini-Grant Program
Tips for Writing a Strong Application

October 5, 2021
Mini-Grant Program Overview

- Annual funding program
- High-impact demonstration projects
- Energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean transportation projects
- Open to all SC government entities and non-profits
- Individual awards of up to $10,000
- [http://energy.sc.gov/incentives/grants](http://energy.sc.gov/incentives/grants)
Mini-Grant Program Timeline

- July 1 (beginning of fiscal year): Application period opens
- July 31: Application period closes
- August – September: Applications reviewed
- September - October: Selected applications presented to Energy Advisory Council
- October – November: Award agreements executed
- November – May 15: Project implementation
- May 15 – June 30 (end of fiscal year): Post-installation monitoring, disbursement of grant funds, and closeout
Application Tips and Guidance
General Application Tips

• Complete all application fields
• Address all scoring criteria
• Be consistent in information that is provided (e.g., project cost, scope, etc.)
• Provide supporting documentation
  • Product specification sheets
  • Calculations for energy metrics
  • Material and/or labor quotes, if available
  • Other supplemental information as needed
Mini-Grant Criteria

• All applications reviewed across each of the following criteria:
  • Expected energy savings and simple payback period
  • Visibility of the project
  • Ability to complete the project within the specified timeframe
  • Applicant’s contribution to the project
  • Educational and/or demonstration value of the project

• EACH of the above criteria need to be addressed in the application!
Energy Savings and SPP

What we look for:

- Projects that provide a greater energy impact
- Projects with higher savings and/or shorter payback periods
- Projects considered against those of similar type, e.g., lighting vs lighting, solar vs solar
- More clearly defined scopes
- Calculations and support for energy metrics
- If you need help with calculations, contact us!
Visibility of the Project

What we look for:

• Projects that will be seen by the public and can be used for demonstration
• Project locations with greater public visibility, e.g., in public spaces, accessible to many different people
• Energy measures that are more visible to end users
• A detailed description of how you plan to enhance visibility through promotional materials, placards, etc.
Ability to Complete Project within Timeframe

What we look for:

• All applications we select for award must be successfully closed out by end of fiscal year

• Consideration of compressed timeframe for installation

• Projects with more clearly defined scopes, have identified specific products, received quotes, etc.

• Potential for review under National Environmental Policy Act and/or Historic Preservation
Applicant’s Contribution to Project

What we look for:

• Applications that are best served by Mini-Grant Program
• Percentage of project cost covered by mini-grant (If possible, some contribution to the project cost)
• Leveraging of other external funds, such as utility incentives
• Size of project and appropriateness for Mini-Grant Program
• Evidence of effort put into application
Educational and/or Demonstration Value

What we look for:

- Applications that can be used to educate the public
- Specific plans for how project will be used for education
- Projects that include student involvement or used in educational settings
- Consideration of more novel energy measures
Clean Transportation Additional Criteria

- Avoided consumption of petroleum products
- Reduction in vehicle miles traveled
- Compatibility with current or future infrastructure, community interest, or policies/goals
- Expected useful life of the project and impact
Other Considerations

- Number of applications received, and individual amounts requested
- Mixture of project types and locations, and types of receiving organizations
- Rural and/or low-income benefit
- Previous funding awards to organization
Successful Application Examples
City of Greenville - Solar

• >31 kW solar installation on David Hellams Community Center
• Greatest savings and fastest SPP of solar apps received
• Project located on community center in “Special Emphasis” neighborhood
• Detailed plan on incorporating project into community center learning activities, and media campaign
• Significant portion of project costs covered by applicant
• Scope fully fleshed out with siting, analysis, etc. completed prior to submitting
Lee School District - Lighting

• Parking lot LED lighting at Lee Central High and Middle Schools
• Higher savings and shorter SPP among lighting apps received
• Located in rural Bishopville
• Detailed plan on incorporating into teaching activities and publicizing project’s benefits
• Significant portion of project costs covered by applicant
• Scope fully fleshed out with quote and product specs from lighting vendor
Benedict College – Electric Vehicle

• Electric vehicle and charging station for use by campus police
• Avoidance of consumption of petroleum products
• Project incorporated into college’s 5-year BEST Plan: A Bold Execution to Strategic Transformation
• First EV to be used by police force in SC
• Significant portion of project costs covered by applicant
Clemson University – Building Controls

- Automated control system for motorized blinds in building atrium
- Completed in-house with student involvement
- Educational project teaching students engineering and coding principles, in addition to energy savings
- Publicized as part of work done by Clemson Energy Visualization & Analytics Center (CEVAC)
- Portion of project costs covered by applicant
Richland School District 2 – Biodiesel Production

• Expansion of biodiesel production program at Blythewood High School
• Completed in-house with student involvement
• Educational project teaching students on biodiesel production and performing advanced chemical analyses
• Publicized as part of Bengal Biodiesel Program
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