



Agenda Date: 3/18/26
Agenda Item: 8E

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
44 South Clinton Avenue, 1st Floor
Post Office Box 350
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350
www.nj.gov/bpu/

ENERGY AND CLEAN ENERGY

IN THE MATTER OF NEW JERSEY CLEAN ENERGY) ORDER
PROGRAM FISCAL YEAR 2025 COMMUNITY ENERGY)
PLAN GRANT PROGRAM) DOCKET NO. QO24120873

Party of Record:

Brian O. Lipman, Esq., Director, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel

BY THE BOARD:

By this Order, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“Board” or “BPU”) considers applications received for participation in the fourth program year (“Program Year 4”) of the Community Energy Plan Grant (“CEPG”) program.

BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Board created the CEPG Program in 2019 with the purpose of providing grants to municipalities throughout New Jersey to create localized energy plans, or Community Energy Plans (“CEPs”) that are aligned with the goals of New Jersey’s 2019 Energy Master Plan (“EMP”).¹ The EMP goals chosen for inclusion in the CEPG Program are associated with EMP Strategies one (1), two (2), three (3), four (4), six (6), and seven (7). The Board partners with Sustainable Jersey for the purposes of the CEPG Program, wherein Sustainable Jersey assists with program design and provides technical assistance to awardees selected to participate in the CEPG Program.

In 2021, following the selection of grantees for the first year of the CEPG Program (“Program Year 1”), the Board requested that its Division of Clean Energy’s Office of Clean Energy Equity evaluate results from Program Year 1 with a focus on prioritizing low- and moderate-income communities and removing barriers to participation. After conducting such a review, Board Staff (“Staff”) recommended revising the CEPG Program’s application requirements, identifying “overburdened municipalities” (“OBMs”) that would be eligible to receive \$25,000 grants, as well as technical assistance from Sustainable Jersey in submitting their CEPG applications and developing their respective CEPs. Staff recommended that those municipalities not identified as OBMs would be

¹ In re the Clean Energy Programs and Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 Trued Up and Revised Budget, BPU Docket No. QO18040393, Order dated March 29, 2019. See also New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, 2019 New Jersey Energy Master Plan.

eligible for \$10,000 grants. By Order dated October 6, 2021, the Board approved the recommended changes for the second iteration of the CEPG Program (“Program Year 2”).²

On June 8, 2022, the Board approved Program Year 2 grant awards for forty-six (46) municipalities, twenty-four (24) of which were OBMs.³ The grant term for Program Year 2 was eighteen (18) months, spanning from June 2022 until November 2023.

The Board approved the opening of the third year of the CEPG Program (“Program Year 3”). The CEPG Program was again evaluated based on lessons learned from Program Year 2, and Staff recommended additional changes to the CEPG Program, including a shortened program timeline and revised criteria to determine OBMs. The new OBM criteria implemented with Program Year 3 is as follows:

1. The municipality has over fifty percent (50%) of its population living in an overburdened community (“OBC”) Census Block, as such term is defined by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to New Jersey’s Environmental Justice Law, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-157 et seq.; and
2. The municipality meets one (1) or both of the following criteria (either a or b):
 - a. Over thirty-five percent (35%) of the population is living under 200% of the poverty level according to U.S. Census 2021 American Community Survey census data; or
 - b. The municipality has a distress score of forty (40) or higher according to New Jersey Department of Community Affairs’ Municipal Revitalization Index.

Under Program Year 3 of the CEPG Program, municipalities were again eligible to receive a \$10,000 grant award and technical assistance from Sustainable Jersey to establish CEPs. OBMs were entitled to an enhanced award of \$25,000 and priority technical assistance from Sustainable Jersey. Grant funds were required to be utilized on the development of CEPs and to fund activities that support the creation of said CEPs. Ninety-two (92) municipalities were selected for award for Program Year 3, fifteen (15) of which were OBMs, totaling \$1,145,000.⁴

On June 27, 2024, the Board issued an Order approving the Clean Energy Program budget for Fiscal Year 2025.⁵ The Fiscal Year 2025 budget allocated \$5,564,268 to community energy grants, consisting of carry forward funding from the Clean Energy Program Fiscal Year 2024 budget.

² In re the New Jersey Clean Energy Program Fiscal Year 2022 Community Energy Planning, BPU Docket No. QO21091113, Order dated October 6, 2021.

³ In re New Jersey Clean Energy Program Fiscal Year 2022 Community Energy Planning, BPU Docket No. QO21091113, Order dated June 8, 2022.

⁴ In re New Jersey Clean Energy Program Fiscal Year 2024 Community Energy Plan Grant Program, BPU Docket No. QO23090714, Order dated August 14, 2024.

⁵ In re the Clean Energy Programs and Budget for the Fiscal Year 2025, BPU Docket No. QO24040224, Order dated June 27, 2024.

The fourth program year of CEPG was approved by the Board in February 2025, which implemented minor modifications to the program.⁶ Notably, two (2) new requirements were implemented for the new program year. First, as part of the closeout process, grantees are now required to publish their final CEPs to their official municipality websites and social media pages. Imposing such a requirement on grantees allows residents of each municipality, and any other affected parties, to read the plan and know what actions the municipality plans to take. Second, grantees must provide the Board with proof that the plan is posted and accessible online, and that the plan was promoted on social media. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete grant closeout.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The Board received twenty-one (21) applications for the fourth program year of CEPG. For an application to be deemed administratively complete, applicants were required to: 1) submit a completed application form in SAGE; and 2) submit an executed municipal resolution containing language supporting application to the program. Of the twenty-one (21) applications that were submitted, nineteen (19) were timely submitted and deemed by Staff to be administratively complete. Two (2) applications were submitted after the approved application deadline and therefore were not deemed to be eligible for award. The Board **HEREBY APPROVES** all nineteen (19) administratively complete and timely applications for participation in the fourth program year of CEPG.

Seventeen (17) of the municipalities which submitted administratively complete and timely applications are eligible for the \$10,000 award, and two (2) are OBMs eligible to receive the enhanced award of \$25,000. The total dollar amount of awards under the fourth program year of CEPG is accordingly \$220,000.

The Board **HEREBY DIRECTS** that all CEPG awardees must, upon completion of its plan or by the end of the grant term, submit to the Board its completed Community Energy Plan, a fully executed resolution adopting the plan, a final CEPG expenditure and performance report, and proof that the completed plan was posted to the municipal website and promoted on social media. Additionally, the Board **FURTHER ORDERS** that, beginning three (3) months following receipt of its CEPG award, awardees deemed to be OBMs must begin submitting quarterly expenditure reports detailing how grant funds were used.

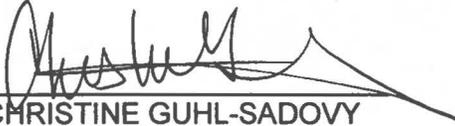
The Board **FURTHER ORDERS** that, upon the conclusion of the program term, awardees must submit one (1) final expenditure report and one (1) performance report to the Board. The final CEPG performance report will be provided to grantees before the end of their CEPG grant term.

⁶ In re New Jersey Clean Energy Program Fiscal Year 2025 Community Energy Plan Grant Program, BPU Docket No. QO24120873, Order dated February 12, 2025.

This Order shall be effective on March 25, 2026.

DATED: March 18, 2026

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:

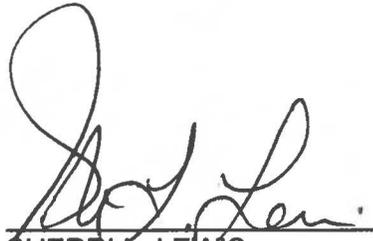

CHRISTINE GUHL-SADOVY
PRESIDENT


DR. ZENON CHRISTODOULOU
COMMISSIONER


MICHAEL BANGE
COMMISSIONER


EMMA REBHORN
COMMISSIONER


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COMMISSIONER

ATTEST: 
SHERRIL LEWIS
BOARD SECRETARY

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the within document is a true copy of the original in the files of the Board of Public Utilities.

IN THE MATTER OF NEW JERSEY CLEAN ENERGY PROGRAM FISCAL YEAR 2025 COMMUNITY ENERGY
PLAN GRANT PROGRAM

DOCKET NO. QO24120873

SERVICE LIST

Brian O. Lipman, Esq., Director
Division of Rate Counsel
140 East Front Street, 4th Floor
Trenton, NJ 08625-0003
blipman@rpa.nj.gov

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

44 South Clinton Avenue, 1st Floor
P.O. Box 350
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350

Sherri L. Lewis, Board Secretary
board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov

Bob Brabston, Esq., Executive Director
robert.brabston@bpu.nj.gov

Stacy Peterson, Deputy Executive Director
stacy.peterson@bpu.nj.gov

Benjamin Tabor, Chief of Staff
benjamin.tabor@bpu.nj.gov

Taryn Boland, Senior Advisor
taryn.boland@bpu.nj.gov

General Counsel's Office

Elsbeth Faiman Hans, Deputy General Counsel
elsbeth.hans@bpu.nj.gov

Steven Athanassopoulos, Legal Specialist
steven.athanassopoulos@bpu.nj.gov

Office of the Economist

Benjamin Witherell, Ph.D., Chief Economist
benjamin.witherell@bpu.nj.gov

Dianne Crilly
dianne.crilly@bpu.nj.gov

Jackie O'Grady
jackie.ogrady@bpu.nj.gov

NJBPU, cont'd

Division of Clean Energy

Véronique Oomen, Director
veronique.oomen@bpu.nj.gov

Stacy Ho Richardson, Deputy Director
stacy.richardson@bpu.nj.gov

Kevin Monte de Ramos, Bureau Chief
Energy Efficiency and Building Decarbonization
kevin.montederamos@bpu.nj.gov

David Titus, Program Specialist Clean Energy Equity
david.titus@bpu.nj.gov

Rupa Deshmukh, Senior Program Manager
rupa.deshmukh@bpu.nj.gov

Dustin Wang, Program Specialist I
dustin.wang@bpu.nj.gov

Earl Thomas Pierce, Administrative Analyst
earl.pierce@bpu.nj.gov

Jonathan Gordon, Deputy Director
jonathan.gordon@bpu.nj.gov

New Jersey Division of Law

Public Utilities Section
R.J. Hughes Justice Complex
25 Market Street, P.O. Box 112
Trenton, NJ 08625

Pamela Owen, Assistant Section Chief, DAG
pamela.owen@law.njoag.gov

Matko Ilic, DAG
matko.ilic@law.njoag.gov

Appendix 1: Approved Recipients of CEPG PY4 Awards

Municipality	County	Award Amount
Long Branch	Monmouth	\$25,000
Newark	Essex	\$25,000
Atlantic Highlands	Monmouth	\$10,000
Bloomfield	Essex	\$10,000
Byram	Sussex	\$10,000
Chesterfield	Burlington	\$10,000
East Amwell	Hunterdon	\$10,000
Egg Harbor Township	Atlantic	\$10,000
Englewood Cliffs	Bergen	\$10,000
Hackensack	Bergen	\$10,000
Hillsborough	Somerset	\$10,000
Jackson	Ocean	\$10,000
Keyport	Monmouth	\$10,000
Mahwah	Bergen	\$10,000
Mullica	Atlantic	\$10,000
Neptune City	Monmouth	\$10,000
North Haledon	Passaic	\$10,000
Point Pleasant Beach	Ocean	\$10,000
Wall	Monmouth	\$10,000