

Process for Grant Application

1. Complete the POC Grant Application by 2/28/11 (typed **PLEASE**) and support documents
2. If multiple projects are being submitted to reach your grant allocation total, individual applications must be submitted for each
3. Mail to: NOPEC, Inc., Leigh Herington, Executive Director, 31320 Solon Road, Suite 20, Solon, Ohio 44139. Electronic submissions are encouraged and should be submitted to lherington@nopecinfo.org.
4. Grants reviewed by Grant Administrator
5. Follow up conversations with communities to discuss revisions or documentation needs
6. Revisions, as needed, by applicant
7. Grant Administrator evaluates final grant
8. Grant Administrator rates grants (highest quality, good quality, solid quality, quality); makes recommendations for approval to Grant Review Committee
9. Grant Review Committee meets and makes final approval; sends to NOPEC Board of Directors for official recommendation and notification
10. Grantees notified **WITHIN 2 weeks OF BOARD APPROVAL**
11. Grantee / NOPEC final agreement signed
12. 25% funding distributed within 30 days after notification **AND SIGNED AGREEMENT**

Grant Evaluation Checklist

Required Items for POC Grant Completion:

- Time frame for the project is reasonable given the scope of work projected
- Reporting mechanisms are sound
- Goals are clearly expressed
- The need is clearly demonstrated
- The activities / activity time line described will ensure goals are reached
- The project will be appropriately monitored
- Energy conservation can be demonstrated through evaluation
- The project meets one or more of the five (5) described categories of funding
- Proposed vendors have demonstrated credibility
- Applicant has demonstrated readiness for the project
- Community benefit is articulated
- The budget presented is clear and supports rationale for the project
- Administrative costs are 10% or below
- Writing is clear with a good connection of ideas

Projected 2010-2011 P.O.C. Grant Allocation Cycle

Submit Grants By	Grant Review Committee Meeting Dates	Grant Allocations Begin
Session 1: May 31, 2010	June 16, 2010	July 5, 2010
Session 2: July 23, 2010	August 18, 2010	September 1, 2010
Session 3: September 24, 2010	October 20, 2010	November 3, 2010
Session 4: November 12, 2010	December 15, 2010	December 29, 2010
Session 5: January 14, 2011	February 16, 2011	March 2, 2011
Session 6: February 28, 2011	April 20, 2011	May 4, 2011

POC Grant Questions and Answers

Where do the Powering Our Community grant funds come from?

NOPEC has entered into a nine year agreement on behalf the residents and small business customers in each of NOPEC's 129 communities. As part of that agreement, NOPEC negotiated a "Powering our Communities grant program" with First Energy Solutions(FES), in which FES agreed to deposit \$30 per customer with NOPEC, Inc., for each NOPEC community to use in its grant program for energy conservation and energy related activities. NOPEC Inc., is holding these assets in escrow and will distribute them to the communities as each completes the application and approval process.

I've never written a grant before; can you help me?

The grant is designed to be simple and straightforward. If, at any time, you need assistance during your grant development process, the POC Grants Administrator, Georgia Reash, is available at grantsadmin@nopecinfo.org or (216) 338-7016. You may even submit a draft for the Grants Administrator to preview, and she will follow up with any recommendations or suggestions to ensure your final submission is ready for Committee review.

How do we get started in figuring out a project?

Reviewing the POC Grant Guidelines should provide a great starting point for generating ideas amongst your community's leadership team. You may also want to conduct some self-directed internet research to familiarize yourself with energy efficiency projects / initiatives taking place in communities. Also, conversations with peer NOPEC member communities may also be helpful during your exploration process. Once ideas have been generated, target your energy efficiency initiatives so that they help meet operational needs and/or support community development plans.

Is this a one time opportunity?

The POC grant program is available to all electric NOPEC member communities through February 28, 2011. A "Round 2" of funding may become available after February 28, 2011 on a competitive basis, dependent upon any balance of funds not claimed by communities during the first funding opportunity cycle.

Are multiple projects allowed?

Yes, multiple projects are allowable up to the amount of your grant application; however, please submit one application per project.

Are collaborative community projects allowed?

Collaborative projects between NOPEC member communities are welcomed and encouraged.

Can projects benefiting the homes of our residents be submitted?

Yes! Energy efficiency is a priority for both municipal and residential properties.

How do we best detail the loss and gain in energy savings?

We recognize that not all projects have defining parameters around the tracking of energy savings (such as measured kilowatts). In this event, use estimates based on experience and/or other tracking mechanism (such as energy bills).

Are requests for vehicles allowable?

New vehicles and vehicle improvements are allowable as long as energy efficiency can be demonstrated.

Is an energy audit required or recommended?

Energy audits are valuable tools for planning and assessment; however they are not required for the POC grant application. The grant parameters allow for coverage of energy audits.

Do we have to use prevailing wage standards in our application?

The POC guidelines do not require prevailing wage standards; follow the state and federal laws around wage requirements, as well as standards established by your Council or your political subdivision.

What is the check distribution turn around time if we are approved?

Our goal is to facilitate a quick turn around time for our NOPEC Communities. Following notification of grant approval, checks will be distributed after the POC Agreement Form is signed. The Committee meeting schedule is outlined on the NOPEC web site and in the Grant Support Packet.

What percentage of money will be distributed once we are approved?

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the grant amount will be distributed upon grant approval notification and the signing of the agreement, 25% awarded upon project start, 25% awarded upon project mid-point and 25% awarded at project completion. The distribution process is driven by applicant reporting. If you have a special need regarding funding distribution, articulate your request and its supporting rationale in your grant application, as well as a cover letter.

Once we are notified for grant approval, our project is started and will be done in two days. Can we request all of the funding upfront?

If you have a special need regarding check distribution, articulate your request and its supporting rationale in your grant application, as well as a cover letter. If there is a request for payment modification and the Grants Committee approves the request, the money will be distributed accordingly.

Will there be an audit after the grant process?

NOPEC will not be conducting an audit of your grant funds used after the project. Please remember, however, there will be a report due at the completion of the project and a final report due one year after the completion of the project(s).

Does the project have to go through the bidding process?

Follow the bidding process as you would any other project, if it is required by law.

What if we want to give our money to another entity in the community; like a school?

We want you to spend the money in such a way that it most benefits your political subdivision. If you want to use this money to fund another entity, like a school, please include in your application why you believe this meets the guidelines and why you believe this is the best way for you to positively impact your community.

If we are submitting the proposal electronically, does NOPEC require the submission of a signed hard copy be sent to their office?

No. If you submit your proposal electronically, we will consider your proposal as being submitted and the supporting email as signature on file.

Best Practices in Community Grantsmanship

These are characteristics in highest quality grants; can any be included in your project?

- ✓ **Demonstrate Organizational Continuity:** show how projects align to and support the sustainability plan / economic development plan of the community.
- ✓ **Reference Data:** use data, research or industry best practices to document need and give rationale to the request.
- ✓ **Use Collaboration:** involve cross-departmental and cross-sector resource sharing, partnership and networking.
- ✓ **Learn from Your Work:** use solid qualitative and quantitative evaluation for knowledge building and continuous improvement.
- ✓ **Show Resident Value:** integrate return value to the residents (quality of life, etc...)
- ✓ **Link to Economic Development:** link the project to larger economic development goals via jobs development and/or skills training.
- ✓ **Explore New Technologies:** use creative applications of technology to support cost savings, efficiency building and return value.
- ✓ **Build in Systemic Improvement:** show how projects will help enrich the entire organization.
- ✓ **Catalyze Innovation:** explore how the project will spark new ideas, new creative project development or entrepreneurship.

Information and Resources That Might Help

This list is ever expanding; please let us know if you are aware of other key resources organizations.

Regional and Ohio

- Clean Ohio Fund - <http://clean.ohio.gov>
- Clean Fuels Ohio - <http://www.cleanfuelsohio.org/cms/>
- Database for Renewable Energies and Efficiency - <http://www.dsireusa.org>
- Foundation Center Library - <http://foundationcenter.org/cleveland/>
- Environment Ohio - <http://www.environmentohio.org/>
- Green Energy Ohio - <http://www.greenenergyohio.org>
- Ohio Department of Development / Ohio Energy Resources Division - <http://www.development.ohio.gov/>
- Enterprise Community Partners - <http://www.enterprisecommunity.org/>
- Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association - <http://www.glrea.org/>

National

- American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy - <http://www.aceee.org/>
- American Solar Energy Society - <http://www.ases.org/>
- American Wind Energy Association - <http://www.awea.org/>
- Environmental and Energy Study Institute - <http://www.eesi.org/>
- Geothermal Energy Association - <http://www.geo-energy.org/>
- Midwest Energy Alliance - <http://www.mwalliance.org/about-meea>
- National Hydropower Association - <http://www.hydro.org/>
- U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies, National Renewable Energy Laboratory - <http://www.eere.energy.gov/>
- Smart Growth Resource Library – www.smartgrowth.org
- U.S. Green Building Council - <http://www.usgbc.org/>
- U.S. Department of Treasury – Renewable Energy Grants
- U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Energy for America Program
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Energy Star

NOPEC Contact Information

Georgia M. Reash
NOPEC Grants Administrator
31320 Solon Road
Solon, OH 44139
216.338.7016
grantsadmin@nopecinfo.org