



Hudson Valley Regional Council

NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Leadership Round

Mid-Hudson Region Webinar Launch

Questions and Answers

February 9, 2021

General Questions

Q: Can communities that reach 4,000 points apply for a grant at the 3,000 point level AND the 4,000 point level, or is it only one point based grant per community?

A: Awards available at each point threshold (3,000+, 4,000+, 5,000+) can be approached by the awarded community as separate and independent grants toward separate and independent projects. If a community attains each of the thresholds in quick succession, the community can request to apply the cumulative award toward a single project. Timing of award receipt is important as communities receiving grant awards “must propose either a pre-approved project type or a custom project that meets the selection criteria” outlined in the Leadership Round Guidance Document within three months of notification of the grant award(s) by NYSERDA via email.

Q: What qualifies as “Large communities” versus a “Small/Medium sized Communities”?

A: As per NYSERDA guidance, Small/Medium Communities are those that have 0-39,999 community residents and Large Communities are those that have 40,000 or more community residents.

Specific CEC HIA Questions:

[Unified Solar Permit \(USP\)](#): No questions were posed regarding the USP. Please click on the hyperlink to view the materials in the USP Toolkit.

Energy Code Enforcement Training:

Q: The last time NYSERDA offered Energy Code Enforcement Training (ECET) workshops was in June 2019, so we would like to know when ECET workshops will be made available in 2021 as this is key HIA that our city/town/village is really interested in?

A: Unfortunately, due to the serious public health related constraints associated with COVID-19 pandemic, and the fact that NYSERDA's authorized ECET is an "in-person" training, the roll out of the ECET workshops for ALL NYS municipalities has been deferred to begin in Q-4 of

2021. Mid-Hudson municipalities will be notified by HVRC when the ECET workshops are finalized. This information will be available online at the CEC Program site as well.

Q: Can you explain why no points were given for previously satisfying the Code Enforcement Training?

A: NYSERDA's requires that training reflect the most up to date best practices. Please note that demonstrating the completion of the ECET HIA under the Leadership Round as per NYSERDA requires the following:

- At least one code official must complete a **NYSERDA-approved** Clean Energy Communities Energy Code Enforcement Training series **including both residential and commercial workshops**.
- Communities that completed Energy Code Enforcement Training prior to November 15, 2020 must **retake the training to earn points for this action**. Due to COVID-19 and other circumstances, trainings may be offered on a limited basis.
- Submit a copy of the notification of completion email, or comparable information to earn credit for this action. (Emphasis added-excerpted from NYSERDA CEC site.)

[PACE Financing](#)

Q: Can you explain how PACE Finance works?

A: Open C-PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy), also known as Commercial PACE Financing, is a program adopted by an eligible local government that allows property owners to pay back the cost of clean energy upgrades to their commercial or non-profit property over a term that can go as long as 20-30 years, and is secured through a benefit assessment lien on the improved property. Open C-PACE enables eligible commercially-owned buildings in New York State to secure private funds to tackle significant energy upgrades and renewable energy projects in existing building and new construction. This financing structure is available through the Energy Improvement Corporation (EIC) for projects that aim to install permanent improvements that reduce energy costs in existing buildings. EIC is a local development corporation and a New York State nonprofit established specifically to assist municipalities and property owners achieve long-term energy savings and/or generate renewable power for use on site.

Q: Can you clarify what is meant by “counties and cities” in NYS outside of Westchester County being eligible for PACE Financing Resolution Authorization for residents interested in renewable energy projects and clean energy upgrades?

A: Authorizing C-PACE Financing requires the adoption of a resolution. Authorization requires adoption of a local law and signing a municipal agreement with EIC (template documents provided by EIC). Non-EIC PACE programs are also eligible. Date of completion is when the local government became an EIC member or when the Non-EIC PACE program is adopted. The adoption of the C-PACE Finance resolution is applicable to “counties and cities outside Westchester County; cities and towns in Westchester County”. What this means is the C-PACE Finance resolution is adopted at the county and city level in all counties with the

exception of Westchester County. In Westchester County, the resolution authorizing C-PACE Finance can be adopted at the municipal level of cities and towns.

Q: Can points be awarded retroactively for PACE financing?

A: No points can be awarded retroactively. PACE Financing is a new HIA.

Q: Can points be awarded retroactively for the Energize Finance Action that was relevant during the previous grant cycle?

A: Communities that received NYSERDA approval for the Energize NY Finance action must submit documentation under this category to earn points for this action.

Q: How many PACE projects are necessary to get the 300 points?

A: A community has to demonstrate/provide evidence of one (1) project within its municipal jurisdiction to earn the 300 points. Per NYSERDA, in order to earn the PACE Projects – 300 Points, a CEC must:

- Submit documentation from EIC demonstrating closing of one or more Open C-PACE projects located in the jurisdiction, or comparable information.
- To be eligible, the jurisdiction must complete the PACE Financing – Open C-PACE Authorization action. Date of completion is date of the first finance closing.

[Clean Energy Upgrades](#)

Q: The Clean Energy Upgrade HIA states, “Upgrades must be substantially complete after January 1, 2020,” but then states “will be awarded points retroactively.” Can you explain this apparent contradiction?

A: Communities completing this action can only earn credit for its completion once. Those communities that received NYSERDA approval for completing the action prior to the launch of the Leadership Round are awarded points retroactively. Communities that did not submit for this action under the previous CEC Program round must submit for the action under the Leadership Round requirements. Per the Leadership Round Guidance Document, communities requesting credit for the Clean Energy Upgrades HIA must have been **substantially completed upgrades after January 1, 2020**. NYSERDA also references the following:

- Date of completion for this action is defined as the date the project achieves substantial completion.

[Clean Heating and Cooling Demo](#)

Q: Is a heat pump water heater considered as an “air-source heat pump” (ASHP)? Or must an ASHP heat an entire building?

A: Thank you for this two part question. We are awaiting a response from NYSERDA on the first question. With regards to the second question, the Leadership Round Guidance Document states on the Clean Heating & Cooling Demo page that the “municipal building owned and operated by the applying jurisdiction [that] has been recently converted or built

[must] use ground- and air-source heat pump systems as the building's primary heating, cooling, and water-heating systems. The building must be 1,000 square feet or larger and open to the public all year long."

100% Renewable Electricity

Q: How can an interested CEC engage with the 100% Renewable Energy HIA?

A: As per NYSERDA's guidance, a municipality must demonstrate completion of the 100% Renewable Electricity action by submitting the following documentation:

- Submit a completed 100% Renewable Electricity Certification Form (accessed in the 100% Renewable Electricity [Toolkit](#)) or comparable information. Requested information includes the average annual load of all municipal electricity accounts and the percentage of the load that will be matched with New York renewable energy certificates (RECs) that are retired in a New York State Generation Attribute Tracking System (NYGATS). This applies to electricity use that occurred in 2020 and later.
- Date of completion for this action is defined as the date after January 1, 2020 when the renewable energy is delivered.

Q: Bethel in Sullivan County is planning on entering into a power purchase agreement with the contractor building a solar array on our landfill. We plan on getting 100% of our town electricity needs from this solar array. Will this count under the 100% renewable energy high impact action item?

A: We are awaiting a fuller response on this question from NYSERDA and will post an updated Q&A response once we are in receipt. For now, we can share that the step-by-step guidance notes that "for a power purchase agreement (PPA) to count, the project developer must forgo receiving the environmental value ("E Value") of the VDER value stack in order to receive the RECs and retire them in NYGATS."

Climate Smart Communities Certification

Q: Is funding available for a consultant to help communities develop Climate Action Plans under CSCs?

A: The Climate Smart Communities Grant Program through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process has in the past included the development of a climate action plan as an eligible project. This opportunity was included in the most recent CFA in 2019. Once the CFA application is again available, HVRC anticipates CSC Grants being available for climate action plans.

LED Streetlights

Q: Hoping for some clarity re LED conversion points. We have fifty percent of our cobraheads converted to LEDs, but we don't have fifty percent of all lights. It was my understanding we earned credit for fifty percent of cobraheads according to the literature. Did anything change with regards to this?

A: The Leadership Round Guidance Document indicates that municipalities must demonstrate that “a minimum of 50 percent of all municipal and utility-owned cobra-head-style street lights have been converted to LED within the geographic jurisdiction.” “[F]or those communities with less than 20 streetlights, 10 fixtures [must] converted to LED.” The percentage requirement is based on the total of cobra heads owned by the municipality and by the utility. Please note that this high impact action is “Applicable to communities that pay for the electricity for most street lights within the jurisdiction.”

Q: What does “decorative” lights mean?

A: Decorative street lights are those typically seen on Main Streets of communities. They do not serve the purely functional purpose of cobra heads as they have aesthetic features that beautify highly trafficked commercial areas and enhance the pedestrian experience. This company’s [website](#) has good example images of typical decorative street lights.

Q: If a town meets the requirements for LED lights upgrades but has not documented it, may the town submit the documentation now and thereby obtain the points?

A: Yes, as long as it meets the requirement of that “a minimum of 50 percent of all municipal and utility-owned cobra-head-style street lights have been converted to LED within the geographic jurisdiction.” “[F]or those communities with less than 20 streetlights, 10 fixtures [must] converted to LED.” These same requirements apply to decorative-style street lights.

Q: Please clarify if this HIA covers only street lights? What about parking lot lights?

A: Yes, only street lights, whether cobra head style or decorative style, are eligible under this action. Parking lot lights are not.

[Benchmarking](#)

Q: Can a community begin to submit benchmarking information for municipal buildings before legislation is passed?

A: Yes, it can, although communities typically have passed the Resolution first. Please note the collection of cost and usage information related to Benchmarking of municipal building needs to done by the municipality.

[Clean Fleets](#)

Q: Can a muni that already has several EVs get more points for adding more of them after 1/26/21? And, along the same lines, can a municipality that already has EV charging stations get points for adding new charging stations?

A: Clean Fleets HIA is an effort to encourage local governments to invest in electric vehicles and infrastructure while increasing opportunities for constituents to access electric vehicle charging stations. NYSERDA’s guidance specifies that: “Communities that completed the Clean Fleets action prior to the Leadership Round will be awarded 100 points retroactively. Communities may earn additional points by completing the Clean Fleets actions listed above, **provided the date of completion for those actions is after January 26, 2021.**” So the

answer is YES, if a municipality adds new EVs to its existing fleet or adds new EV charging stations after Jan 26, 2021, then these newly added EVs and Charging stations can be used to apply for additional points. Please note there needs to be municipal provision of either two (2) or more Level 2 charging ports or one (1) or more DC fast charge ports that are in active use in the case of Charging Stations.

Q: Do public charging stations count towards the Clean Fleets action?

A: As per NYSERDA's guidance, the municipality must own or lease the equipment related to charging stations. The charging stations may be used for government operations or public use.

Q: Our town took delivery of two hybrid vehicles in Nov 2020. This was not submitted to NYSERDA yet, but can these two vehicles be used to count towards points for the Clean Fleets HIA since they were bought before Jan 26, 2021?

A: NYSERDA's Guidance regarding the purchase and use of Light/Medium Duty EVs and Heavy Duty EVs is clear: 1. "Communities may earn additional points by completing the Clean Fleets actions listed above, **provided the date of completion for those actions is after January 26, 2021.**" 2. "The date of completion for this action is when the equipment became operational." Since the municipality has bought and been using these EVs prior to Jan 26, 2021, then these 2 EVs cannot be counted towards this HIA.

Q: Can EVs be leased rather than purchased to satisfy the Light/ Medium Duty EVs (300 points) and the Heavy Duty EVs (400 points) Clean Fleets Action?

A: No, leased EVs cannot be counted towards demonstrating completion of the Clean Fleets HIA. NYSERDA's guidance in relation to EV Clean Fleets is that all EV's must be purchased.

Q: Do you need to satisfy the EV charger points in order to get points for either of the other Clean Fleets Actions?

A: No, you do not. Each of the 3 Clean Fleets Actions: #1: Charging Stations -200 Points; #2: Light and Medium Duty EVs (300 points), and #3: Heavy Duty EVs (400 points) can be done independently of each other, but they can also all be undertaken by any interested municipality. However, it is important to keep in mind that communities may ONLY apply ONCE for the 3 actions listed above.

Q: Do buses qualify within the Clean Fleets Action?

A: School buses and vehicles used primarily for fixed-route public transit such as a transit bus or "body-on-chassis" minibus are also eligible within Clean Fleets HIA #3 (Heavy Duty EVs- 400 points).

[Community Choice Aggregation \(CCA\)](#)

[NYStretch Energy Code](#)

[Community Campaigns](#)

Q: Can you clarify the process for Community Campaigns? Can you expand on the various options associated with Community Campaigns?

A: NYSERDA guidance on Community Campaigns requires a two-step process to be undertaken. This two-step process must be followed for each Community Campaign undertaken, whether implemented independently or together. The eligible Community Campaigns include Community Solar, Electric Vehicle, Clean Heating & Cooling and Energy Efficiency, and Demand Response.

Step 1 – Before launching a campaign, the applying jurisdiction must visit the “Submit Action Item Documentation” page at www.nyserda.ny.gov/cec and submit a completed Community Campaigns Scoping Document which is available in the Community Campaigns toolkit at www.nyserda.ny.gov/cec. NYSERDA will review the Scoping Document and provide notification by email if the campaign may proceed.

Step 2 – Once the campaign is complete, the applying jurisdiction must return to the “Submit Action Item Documentation” page at www.nyserda.ny.gov/cec and submit the following documentation:

- a) **Submit documentation to demonstrate direct municipal participation in a campaign.** Documentation should be dated and include the name of the applying jurisdiction, and may consist of one or more of the following: a press release, a flyer from an event hosted by the jurisdiction, a website screenshot, a local press article, a certified resolution, or comparable information.
- b) **Submit a completed Customer List (a template is available in the Community Campaigns toolkit at www.nyserda.ny.gov/cec)** that includes the required number of customers (see table below).

The following table indicates the Action Grant amounts:

Municipality Size by Population	Required Number of Campaign Participants	Action Grant Amount	Number of Awards
Large (40,000+)	25	\$15,000	40
Small/Medium (0-39,999)	10	\$5,000	100

Q: Would a Solar for All campaign count as a Community Solar campaign?

A: Yes, it would. As per the Leadership Round Guidance Document, “The local government enters partnerships with regional CDG projects and promotes Community Solar subscriptions to their constituents, including Solar for All subscriptions to Low-Moderate Income (LMI) households. CDG projects may include solar, wind, or hydro facilities.”

Q: We are doing an Energy Navigators campaign through Cornell Coop Extension. If we get 10 people to take action, could that count as a Community Campaign?

A: 10 Campaign participants, or customers would be sufficient to meet the requirements for a small / medium sized municipality. Step 1 and Step 2, noted in the first question in this section, would need to be followed in order to earn credit for this action.

Q: Can we see examples of Scoping Docs for Community Campaigns?

A: Yes, we are hoping to provide additional guidance based on NYSERDA inputs on this matter at a later date.