

USDA Rural Energy for America (REAP) Grant Application FAQ

Q: When does the grant application come out, and when is it due?

A: Applications are always available. Deadlines may change, but are usually the last day of March, June, September, and December.

Q: Can Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) help with the application?

A: Yes! CET/MFEP has funding to help you complete your REAP application at **no cost** to you. We can draft the application for you, review your draft, fill documents in together on a call, or simply answer questions. We can also help with the process of obtaining your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from sam.gov.

Q: I am doing solar (or some other renewable project), but the grant is asking for before and after energy usage.

A: That section is for energy efficiency projects only, you can skip it and go to the renewable energy section.

Q: I am doing an efficiency project, but the grant is asking for net metering.

A: That section is for renewable projects only, you can skip it and fill in the efficiency section.

Q: How long does a farm have to have been in business to apply?

A: There is no requirement for how long a farm has to have been in business.

Q: My farm/business is really small, is that ok?

A: Yes, there is no size requirement. You do need to be commercially involved in agriculture etc., not just growing for yourself/your family.

Q: I am a horse stable, but we're not breeding horses, can I apply?

A: Yes. The keeping of horses as a commercial enterprise is considered agriculture and is eligible.

Q: My farm has an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR). Can we still do energy projects and/or apply to REAP for funding?

A: Yes, within certain parameters. You must be in compliance with all terms of your APR prior to submitting the application, and have documentation that the project has been approved by your APR rep. Additionally, any renewable energy project built on APR land must be sized to serve no more than 200% of the annual operational load of the structures on the land protected by the APR.

Q: Does new construction qualify for REAP?

A: Usually no. It only qualifies if the new building is being used for the same purpose as the existing building, and, based on an Energy Audit, it will be more cost effective and will use less energy on an annual basis to construct a new building than improve the existing building.

Q: Does my business qualify for this grant?

A: To qualify as an Agricultural Producer, you must derive 51% or more of your income from agriculture, as backed up by your federal tax returns, but can be located anywhere. To qualify as a rural small business, you must be located in an [eligible rural area](#) and be considered small (per your NAICS code).

Q: My business is a non-profit. Do we qualify?

A: To apply as a non-profit, you must qualify as an Ag Producer (see above). Non-profits who do not meet the above 51% requirement do not qualify for REAP.

Q: Does my project qualify for this grant?

A: If it saves energy (any kind, including propane, oil, wood, etc.) or if it's a renewable project, probably.

Q: I am installing solar, and I have a shared residential and commercial meter. Does that disqualify my project?

A: No, it is not necessarily disqualified. However, you will need to quantify how much electric use is going to the residence vs. the business. You will likely need to document this with a load calculation, which can be done as part of an energy audit. 51% or more of the usage must be commercial in order for the project to be eligible. You may also install a second meter to separate the usages.

Q: I am having trouble typing in the application PDF, and/or there isn't enough space there to say what I want to say.

A: You are welcome to put your answers in a Word doc or similar, and include that with your application submission. Be sure to clearly label which questions you're answering and put a note in the application itself saying 'see attached' so the reviewers don't think it's been left blank.

Q: When will I hear back after submitting?

A: There is no firm deadline, but you should hear back with a decision about six months after submission. You may be contacted sooner if there are missing documents, or for clarification.

Q: How much of the project cost does the grant cover?

A: The grant covers 50% of eligible project costs for efficiency projects and renewable projects that don't generate greenhouse gasses (GHG).

Q: I've applied for an MDAR grant, but don't have an award letter yet. Should I put that on the REAP application?

A: The USDA won't consider funding that you can't back up with documentation, so no.

Q: My project is about soil or water, and not energy. Can you help?

A: That kind of project falls outside of what the MFEP does, as it's not energy related. It will not be eligible for REAP, but there may be other applicable federal grants.

Q: When can I start my project?

A: After you hear about the grant award. Additionally, you may receive notice from the USDA that they have completed their environmental review, and you can proceed at your own risk (with no guarantee of funds).

Q: When does the project need to be completed by?

A: You have two years from the date of the award announcement to complete the project.

Q: I need contact info for the USDA related to the REAP grant.

A: [Here is a link](#) to the USDA REAP page.

Contact is:

Jordan Henault: Jordan.Henault@usda.gov

REAP Grant Audits

Q: Do I need an audit to apply for REAP?

A: Only if you're doing an energy efficiency project. Audits are not usually required for solar or other renewable projects. (If you have a shared residential meter, you will need some kind of load analysis demonstrating how much electricity is used by the residence vs. the business, but it doesn't have to be a full energy audit.)

Q: Can you help me get an audit?

A: Yes, we have an engineering partner we can refer you to, and MFEP can cover 75% of the audit cost, paid directly to the auditor.

Q: How much will I have to pay for the audit?

A: It depends on the scope of the audit, but most farms end up paying \$800-\$1000. You will know the cost and how much MFEP will cover before you have to commit to anything.

Q: How long is an audit good for?

A: Audits are good for 2-5 years, depending on what changes are made to the business.

Q: It's too late for me to get an audit done before the grant deadline, am I out of luck?

A: Not necessarily. If you can quantify the amount of energy you're currently using, and will use after the project, you can submit that in lieu of the audit, though it will not score as well.

Q: Can I apply for both an MDAR grant and a REAP grant?

A: Yes, and you should if you qualify for both! MDAR is a state agency, and REAP is awarded through the federal government, so they are separate. You get more points on both grants for having secured other funding, so getting one grant will help you get the other.

Q: How do I contact the MFEP?

A: You can reach us at info@massfarmenergy.com and 413-727-3090

Submission FAQ

Q: How do I submit the grant?

A: Email to Jordan Henault at Jordan.Henault@usda.gov. You can also cc Jessica and Caroline (Jessica.Debarros@usda.gov; Caroline.Studer@usda.gov)

Q: What do I need to include with my grant submission?

A: See checklist in the application doc. In addition to the signed grant application itself (small, medium, or large), you should include:

- A project specific technical assessment (renewable), or energy audit including the project proposed (efficiency)
 - The USDA may request a feasibility study in some circumstances
- Vendor or contractor quotes
 - Including a shade report for solar

- Proof of balance of funding needed to implement the proposed project – for example, bank credit reference letters, line of credit reference letters, demonstration of other grant funds for the project, or an executed loan
- Minimum of 12 months of historical utility bills
- SF-424 (signed)
- SF-424 C
- SF-424 D (signed)
- Environmental Checklist and accompanying maps
- Renewable Energy Systems (RES) or Energy Efficiency (EE) Vendor Certification

Q: Will I get a confirmation of submission?

A: Yes, you should get an email confirming that the USDA has received your application.