



Building Decarbonization Fund

Guidelines for 2025 Pilot Fund

Funding Purpose and Overview

In Tompkins County we are seeing increasing signs of climate change, such as more frequent heat waves and increased flooding. While our community continues working towards greenhouse gas emission reduction to fight climate change, at the same time, attention is shifting to making our infrastructure more resilient. The building sector, besides being one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, is also a key target to improve resilience. However, building improvement projects can be expensive and difficult to manage.

To address these challenges, Park Foundation developed the pilot Building Decarbonization Fund (BDF) that will equitably distribute funding for projects like energy efficiency upgrades, heat pump installations, and onsite renewable energy in local non-profit buildings. Funding and technical assistance will be available to assist with planning, managing, and implementing the project. The fund will align with the City of Ithaca's Justice50 initiative by directing at least half of the funding towards Climate Justice Communities. Additionally, the BDF is intended to leverage state and federal funding streams at this pivotal time.

The Fund will launch in January 2025. Park will accept proposals and award grants over multiple rounds until the funding for the pilot is expended. The pilot Fund will be administered by the Park team. Funding decisions will be based on evaluation criteria that were developed with community input.

Funding Provisions

- Grants between \$20,000 and \$100,000 will be awarded until the pilot grant fund of \$500,000 is expended. Park Foundation expects to fund between six and 12 projects during the pilot period.
- A revolving loan fund of \$500,000 is available. Low-interest loans (0.5%) between \$20,000 and \$100,000 each will be considered, with a payback period of five years.
- Loans will require a full funding match; matching for grants is desired, not required.

Proposal Timeline

- Proposals will be accepted beginning January 10, 2025
- Proposals for Q1 are due January 31, 2025. Funding awards will be announced and paid in March.
- Proposals for Q2 are due March 27, 2025. Funding awards will be announced and paid in June.
- At least half of the funding will be reserved for Q2. Additional rounds of funding will be offered if funds remain after Q2.
- An optional online BDF information session for potential applicants is scheduled for Friday, January 17, 2025 at noon. Contact Nick Goldsmith (see below) by January 16 for a link to the session.

Who Can Apply?

- Not-for-profit 501(c)3 organizations in Tompkins County are eligible to apply.
- Higher education institutions, K-12 schools, and government agencies are not eligible.

What Projects are Eligible for Funding?

- All projects must show greenhouse gas emission reduction and/or increased resiliency. Examples include but are not limited to: energy efficiency measures (insulation), electrification of heating and cooking (heat pumps), EV chargers, and on-site renewable energy (rooftop solar).
- Projects may include improvements that are necessary to enable other project components, such as electric upgrades, remediation, or repairs.
- Projects may include components such as project management, design work, energy studies, and third-party commissioning.
- Free technical assistance is offered by the local [Business Energy Advisors](#) program. Free energy use tracking is offered by the [Ithaca 2030 District](#). These programs may be able to help develop your project both before and after submitting a BDF proposal.
- Projects should be completed within one year of the funding award date.

Proposal Information

Include this information with your proposal

Funding decisions will be based on the online proposal and the following evaluation criteria that were developed with community input. To submit the information asked for in this section, please create a document with the questions below (indicated by ➤) and your responses to them, and attach the document to your online proposal. See “Prepare and Submit Your Proposal” below for additional application instructions.

1. Funding Requested

- Please specify if you are applying for grant funding, a low-interest loan, or both, and the amount(s) you are requesting.
- Do you anticipate needing assistance with project management, project design, requesting and reviewing bids, implementation, or any other portions of the projects?
- Describe here or in the online application any committed sources of funding for this project. Matching funds are encouraged but not required for grant funding. Loans will require a 1:1 funding match. Examples of funding match sources include: cash, operating funds, donations, endowment, in-kind services, or other grants. At the time of application, your organization should have an idea of how you will support the match requirements. Applications with this information identified are more competitive. If awarded, at least 50% of the match funding should be accessible at the time the grant agreement is executed, and 100% must be identified. 100% must be accessible by 50% project completion.

2. Basic building information

- Please provide the address, total square footage, square footage affected by project, and name of individual/organization that owns the building/space.

3. Impact

- How will this project reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, and/or make the building/space more resilient?
- Describe other impacts this project will have on the building/space and/or your organization.

4. Centering Equity

The Fund aims to align with the City of Ithaca’s [Justice50](#) program by allocating at least 50% of the funding (grants and loans) to organizations that serve Climate Justice Communities (CJC) - communities that bear a disproportionate burden of the negative impacts of climate change and are least able to prepare, withstand and recover from those impacts.

Using the guidelines below, please share if and how your organization centers equity and serves CJs. The City of Ithaca uses the table below to identify Climate Justice *individuals* and *households*; **the BDF uses the same table to identify CJC-serving organizations.**

| Population Characteristics & Health Vulnerabilities | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Income | Race & Ethnicity | Health Outcomes & Sensitivities | Housing, Mobility, & Communications |
| Household makes less than 65% of the County annual median income | Residents are a racial minority | Residents experience food insecurity or low child nutrition levels | Residents are renters |
| Residents and/or their children are eligible for needs-based local, state, or federal financial assistance | Residents have limited English language proficiency | Has a history of hospitalization for asthma or COPD | Residents spend more than 15% of their total income on household energy costs |
| Residents 25 years of age or older do not possess a high school diploma or GED | Neighborhood has a history of redlining | Has a history of hospitalization for heart attack | Residents occupy a manufactured home |
| Single parent households | Residents are undocumented immigrants currently working in Tompkins County | Residents lack health insurance | Home was built prior to 1960 |
| -- | -- | Residents with disabilities | Household lacks internet access |
| -- | -- | Adults over the age of 65 | Residents are experiencing homelessness |

Source: City of Ithaca. **Note:** Under housing, mobility and communications, the BDF has added an additional criterium: Home is in rural area.

- If your organization serves CJs, please provide a narrative describing how your organization and/or building/space meets the individual criteria in the table. Please address all the criteria satisfied by your organization and/or building/space, preferably *at least* one criterion from *at least* three of the four columns. This could relate to:
 - The organization’s mission and policies
 - The communities that are intentionally serviced by the organization (e.g. neighborhoods, demographics)
 - How the organization is serving those communities (e.g. focus on rural)
 - The composition of the staff and board of the organization, especially leadership
- If applicable, describe any additional ways your organization or building supports Climate Justice Communities.

5. Energy Use

- Describe any previous energy and resilience projects completed for this building.
- Have you tracked the energy use of the building/space? If so, please attach results here or to online proposal. It is highly recommended but not required that you do this before submitting a proposal. See “Additional Resources” section for available assistance.

- Have you performed an energy study of the building? If so, please attach here or to online proposal. This is recommended but not required before submitting a proposal. See “Additional Resources” section for available assistance.

Prepare and Submit Your Proposal

- All proposals must be submitted online. Please do not email proposals. The full proposal should be used, not the letter of inquiry (LOI).
- Follow the application instructions available at www.parkfoundation.org/grants/how-to-apply.
- Remember to attach the questions and documents discussed in “Proposal Information,” above.
- Questions about proposal submission or other elements of the BDF may be directed to Nick Goldsmith, Program Officer, at ng@parkfoundation.org or 607-882-2171.

Additional Resources

- Free technical assistance, including guidance on funding available for these types of building projects, is offered by the local [Business Energy Advisors](#) program.
- Free energy use tracking and cohort-based learning on building decarbonization and resilience are offered by the [Ithaca 2030 District](#).
- [NYSERDA](#) offers subsidized energy studies through two different programs. The Green Jobs - Green New York program offers energy studies for a very low cost for non-profits. The Flextech program offers discounted in-depth energy studies, as well as funding for energy improvements.
- The [GoodUse](#) program offers funding for facility upgrades that provide energy and water savings (After following the link, scroll down to “Mid-Atlantic States.”)
- Renew America’s Nonprofits (RAN) is a U.S. Department of Energy program that offers funding for energy efficiency building upgrades for nonprofit organizations. RAN funding in New York can be applied for through [Sustainable Westchester](#).
- There may be additional opportunities for building improvement funding or other resources through the Inflation Reduction Act or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. [Sustainable Finger Lakes](#) (SFLX) can connect local organizations to training on federal grant applications and funding management, and opportunities for technical assistance and capacity building. SFLX is acting as the regional liaison to help community groups in Tompkins and surrounding counties to tap into [WE ACT’s Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center](#) resources.