

SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive for Local Units of Government

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MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

DIVISION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

***SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive for Local Units
of Government***

COMM-SOLAPP01-20250228

Date Issued: Friday, February 28, 2025

Date Due: June 30, 2028, or until fully expended

Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.

To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651-296-2600 or go to www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/mn02001.htm.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

COMM- SOLAPP01-20250228

SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive for Jurisdictions

I. Incentive Overview

In 2024 the Minnesota Legislature established the SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive for Jurisdictions ([Minn Stat. § 216C.48](#)). The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance and financial incentives to local units of government that issue permits for residential solar projects and solar plus energy storage systems by incentivizing a permitting authority to adopt the SolarAPP+ software to standardize, automate, and streamline the review and permitting process.

SolarAPP+ is a FREE automated online solar permitting software designed by the Department of Energy that uses a web-based portal to automate the solar project plan review and permit issuance processes for residential solar projects that are

compliant with applicable building and electrical codes. For more information on the SolarAPP+ platform adoption process, see [Attachment 2: 5 Easy Steps to SolarAPP+ Adoption \(.pdf\)](#) and [Attachment 3: Benefits of the SolarAPP+ Online Permitting Software \(.pdf\)](#). Further assistance and resources are outlined in [Section III. Technical Assistance](#).

II. Incentive Funds

Funding Availability

Incentives are available until June 30, 2028, or until fully expended, whichever comes first. The Minnesota Legislature has allocated:

- 1. \$1,500,000 for local units of government located within Xcel territory.
- 2. \$500,000 for local units of government located outside of Xcel territory.

Base Incentive

Incentives are legislatively obligated to be no less than \$5,000 and no greater than \$20,000 (even if when combined with bonus incentive(s), it would otherwise exceed \$20,000). The base incentive amount is capped at \$10,000, with the value determined by the local unit of government’s population, as outlined in [Table 1](#).

Population	Base/Minimum Incentive
< 50,000	\$5,000
50,000 – 99,999	\$7,500
100,000+	\$10,000

Table 1

Bonus Incentives

Local units of government may also qualify for up to three bonus incentives, detailed in [Table 2](#), each with a maximum value up to \$5,000 and shall be reduced if an applicant’s cumulative incentive has reached the \$20,000 maximum. Local units of government may be required to submit proof of eligibility as part of the application process.

Bonus Incentive Type	Maximum Value
History of Issuing Residential Solar or Solar Plus Energy Storage Permits	\$5,000
Current Participant in a Sustainability Program	\$5,000
Integration with Other (Newly Added) Permit Management Software	\$5,000

Table 2

Bonus 1 - History of Issuing Residential Solar or Solar Plus Energy Storage Permits: Local units of government who issued permits for a residential solar or solar plus energy storage system between 2023 - 2024 are eligible for this incentive adder. Applicants demonstrating strong support for residential solar may also be considered (e.g., website resources, incentive programs, partnerships, solar permit trends, etc.).

Bonus 2 - Current Participant in a Sustainability Program: Local units of government who are members of a sustainability program are eligible for this incentive adder. Eligible programs include GreenStep Cities, the United States Department of Energy's SolSmart, and Charging Smart programs. Additional programs may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Bonus 3 - Integration with Other (Newly Added) Permit Management Software: Local units of government who, within the last 12 months, purchased and adopted online permit management software for the first time and who also integrated that new software with SolarAPP+ are eligible for this incentive adder.

III. Technical Assistance

SolarAPP+ Demo Webinars are scheduled for Wed., March 12, 2 – 3pm and Thurs., March 13, 11am – 12pm. Commerce will briefly overview the incentive before SolarAPP+ Foundation staff introduce the SolarAPP+ platform and perform a live platform demo. Registration, and eventually the PowerPoint slides, will be made available online on the

[SolarAPP+ webpage](#).

Applicants are also encouraged to explore the following resources:

1. Read the [SolarAPP+ FAQs](#) and [SolarAPP+ Adoption Guide](#)
2. Register to attend one of the [Standing Onboarding Office Hours](#) with SolarAPP+ staff
3. Reach out to the SolarAPP+ team at team@solar-app.org.
4. Review the additional resources made available by SolarAPP+ for [jurisdictions](#) and [installers](#)

IV. Eligibility

Incentives may be awarded to a local unit of government with the authority to issue permits for residential solar projects and solar plus energy storage system projects.

Minimum Requirements

The following requirements must be met for the application to be considered eligible for an incentive.

1. Applicants must be a local unit of government in Minnesota that is responsible for issuing permits for residential solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating systems.
2. Applications must be submitted under an account linked to the eligible applicant. Applications may be submitted by the local unit of government or by a contractor, developer, vendor, or other third-party organization ("Contractor") on the eligible applicant's behalf.
3. Within the last 12 months, applicants must have deployed SolarAPP+ with it being fully operational within the permitting jurisdiction and made SolarAPP+ available on the permitting authority's website.
4. To be considered eligible, applicants must submit a complete application with all required application documents and information.

V. Application

Application Questions

The following list of questions will be asked in the Department's online submission portal:

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) Information

AHJ Name:
AHJ Physical Street Address:
AHJ Type: ☐ County ☐ City ☐ Township ☐ Other _____
AHJ Population: ☐ <50,000 ☐ 50,000-99,999 ☐ 100,000+
Electric Utility Provider at AHJ Physical Address: ☐ Xcel Energy ☐ Other: _____
AHJ SWIFT Vendor ID:
AHJ Authorized Representative: ☐ Name _____ ☐ Title _____ ☐ Email _____ ☐ Phone Number _____

SolarAPP+ Adoption

Briefly describe what your residential solar PV permitting requirements and procedures were prior to implementing SolarAPP+ (e.g., did you have an existing online software, did you use paper, etc.). Be sure to specify if you adopted SolarAPP+ as a standalone or integrated system. If SolarAPP+ was integrated into permit management software that was newly added within the last 12 months, list and describe the new software, and how it will improve the solar permitting process. Please make sure the following information is included:

Select One ☐ Standalone ☐ Integrated with existing software ☐ Integrated with new software

- ☐ Date of SolarAPP+ adoption and deployment.
- ☐ Link to permitting authority's website where SolarAPP+ is available and usable (e.g., url).

Sustainability Program Participation (Optional)

List and describe any current participation with sustainability programs, including but not limited to, Green Step Cities, Sol Smart, and Charging Smart. Additional programs may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- ☐ *Bonus Credit:* Proof of participation in sustainability program(s)

Solar Permitting History

Describe the history pertaining to issuance of residential solar permits in the AHJ. Be sure to list the total number of residential solar permits issued in the last two years as well as the number of residential solar permits currently in the pipeline to approve (if any).

- ☐ Total number of historical residential solar permits issued in the last 24 months.

- ☐ *Bonus Credit:* Proof of the number of residential solar permits issued in the previous 24 months and any current pipeline of residential solar permits.

Solar Support (Optional)

Describe any efforts to scale up residential rooftop solar deployment in your jurisdiction (including outreach, incentive programs, resources online, etc.).

- ☐ *Bonus Credit:* Supporting documentation to prove strong support of residential solar by AHJ.

Additional Required Documents

- ☐ W-9
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Declaration Form (Exhibit A)

Application Submission Portal

An application **must** be submitted online using the Department's RFP submission portal, *Attachment 1 Step-by-Step Application Guide*. Tips to submitting a successful application include:

- Create an Account on the submission portal.** [GrantVantage \(gvgrantcloud.com\)](https://gvgrantcloud.com) is the link to the application submission portal. To submit a response to this incentive, you must first create an account on the submission portal, unless you have previously created an account. For the application process, **only one account and one user** can be created per applicant. All submissions need to go through that one user account and person. A Step-by-Step Applicant Guide, Attachment 1, is available on the Department's [Request for Proposals \(RFP\) / Minnesota Department of Commerce - Business \(mn.gov\)](#) webpage.
- Complete the application in the submission portal.** Log into your account with the user credentials you created in Step 1. View the application form and respond to all applicable questions under each of the sections in the form and click "save" after answering each question.
 - Application Due Date:** Applications will be reviewed and considered for award in the order that they are received. Incentives will be available until all funds are utilized or until June 30, 2028, whichever comes first.
 - Prepare.** Read the step-by-step applicant user guide which will instruct Applicants how to begin, complete, and apply. Familiarize yourself with the submission portal before the due date to make sure you are well-prepared and familiar with the form and the system.
 - Allow adequate time to complete the online application.** Responders who wish to clarify or revise their application after submission must email energy.contracts@state.mn.us. The Department will return the application to the responder.
 - Responders who encounter what they believe are technical system errors must report to the GrantVantage Support desk (ApplicantSupport@grantvantage.com).

Application Review Process

Each application will be reviewed in the order it was received and assigned a time stamp to document its place in the queue. Incomplete applications will not be entered into the queue until all requested information is submitted.

Please note, the following applications will **not** be considered:

- Applications submitted without necessary documentation
- Emailed applications
- Mailed applications
- Faxed applications

The application review process will include verifying all eligibility requirements and supporting documentation and that all applicants have a current State Vendor ID ([SWIFT Vendor Resources / Minnesota Management and Budget \(MMB\) \(mn.gov\)](#)). If an application is deemed complete, a final incentive amount will be determined.

VI. **Timeline**

All times given in this RFP are Central Prevailing Time.

RFP Issued	Friday, February 28, 2025	Notes
Initial Q&A Period Begins	Monday, Mar. 03, 2025	Sec. VII. Questions
SolarAPP+ Demo Webinars	Wednesday, Mar. 12, 2-3pm Thursday, Mar. 13, 11am-12pm	Sec. III. Technical Assistance
Initial Q&A Period Ends	Friday, Mar. 28, 2025	Sec. VII. Questions
Initial Q&A Responses Posted	Monday, Apr. 07, 2025	Sec. VII. Questions
Applications Due	Friday, June 30, 2028	Sec. V. Application
Anticipated Notification	Monthly, beginning April, 2025	Sec. IX. Notifying Applicants

VII. **Questions**

The Department welcomes questions from Applicants.

RFP And Application Process Questions

All questions about the RFP and application process must be sent to SolarAPP.comm@state.mn.us.
Please note the Section of the RFP, and the page number that the question is regarding, if applicable.
Other Commerce personnel are **NOT** authorized to discuss this RFP with applicants. Contact regarding this RFP with any Commerce personnel could result in disqualification.
All responses to questions submitted during the initial Q&A period will be posted to the [Department’s RFP page](#) by April 7, 2025. Interested parties who downloaded the RFP will receive a notice when responses are posted. Questions received after the initial Q&A period will also be answered by the Department with an updated Q&A document subsequently posted to the RFP page.

SolarAPP+ And Technical Assistance Questions

General SolarAPP+ and technical assistance questions may be sent to SolarAPP.comm@state.mn.us and the Department will provide information and resources as applicable or may forward the inquiry to our technical assistance partners.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to reach out to the SolarAPP+ Foundation staff. See *Section III. Technical Assistance* for contact methods and additional technical assistance-related resources.

VIII. Exhibits and Attachments

The following Exhibit is required for all applicants and must be submitted as part of the application.

Exhibit A: Conflict of Interest Declaration

The following items are attached for reference.

Attachment 1: Step-by-Step Online Application Submission Portal Guide (.pdf)

Attachment 2: 5 Easy Steps to SolarAPP+ Adoption (.pdf)

Attachment 3: Benefits of the SolarAPP+ Online Permitting Software (.pdf)

IX. Notifying Applicants

The Department's applicant submission portal will automatically send a confirmation e-mail upon successful application submission. The Department plans to review applications in the order in which they were received on a monthly basis for the previous month's submissions. The Department intends to notify each monthly cohort of applicants no later than two weeks in the subsequent month (e.g., a submission on March 18 will be reviewed alongside all March applications, with notifications to applicants anticipated no later than Monday, April 14, 2025). The Department shall notify the applicant under the following circumstances:

- If the application is incomplete, the Department will notify the applicant of missing/incomplete information, and the applicant will have five business days to submit correct information.
- If the applicant does not supply a State Vendor ID, the Department will notify them, and the applicant will have five business days to register for a Vendor ID and provide that number to the Department.
- If the application is complete, with all required supporting documentation submitted, the Department will confirm the award.

Please note: The Department will update the [New Energy Programs SolarAPP+ webpage](#) no less than once per month with the available balance of incentive funds remaining for this program.

X. General Requirements

A. Conflicts of Interest

The Department will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to Applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- an Awardee or Applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department due to competing duties or loyalties.

- an Awardee's or Applicant's objectivity in carrying out the incentive duties is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the Applicants or Awardees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the incentive award.

B. Public Data

Per [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#)

- Names and addresses of applicants will be public data once applications are submitted. [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this incentive, when the Awardee received the incentive payment).
- [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this incentive, when all incentive applications have been approved).

C. Voter Registration Requirement:

The Awardee will comply with [Minn. Stat. § 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the Awardee.