

# NC GreenPower Solar Schools 2018

## *Information for NC K-12 Schools Regarding the NC GreenPower Solar Schools Pilot Application*

Issue Date: **January 2, 2018**  
Application Deadline: **February 28, 2018, 5:00 PM EST**

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## Introduction

This document serves to notify educators, administrators and facility managers at public and private K-12 schools in North Carolina that NC GreenPower is seeking to provide grant funding for the cost and installation of a small 3-5 kW solar photovoltaic (“PV”) demonstration system with a weather station, monitoring equipment and curriculum. In the fourth year of the pilot program, NC GreenPower estimates there will be funding for a minimum of five and up to seven school grants providing the lesser of 50% or \$10,000 for each system. This document provides program information, eligibility criteria, funding details, the application process and an estimated timeline for the pilot program. (Please see page 3 for additional eligibility information.)

## NC GreenPower’s Mission

With the mission of improving the quality of the environment in North Carolina, the nonprofit NC GreenPower was founded in 2003 as a statewide program. NC GreenPower helps to connect consumers with renewable energy and carbon offset providers to create positive environmental and economic impacts for our state. All projects supported by the program are located in North Carolina.

In 2015, NC GreenPower launched Solar Schools, a matching grant program to support solar PV installations at North Carolina K-12 schools. Contributions to NC GreenPower are tax-deductible. For more information, visit: [www.ncgreenpower.org](http://www.ncgreenpower.org).

## About the Solar Schools Pilot

The launch of the NC GreenPower Solar Schools pilot came after 20 months of discussions and with approvals by both the NC GreenPower and Advanced Energy Boards of Directors and the NC Utilities Commission (NCUC) to modify the current program. The revisions allow NC GreenPower to not only continue support of eligible renewable energy generators but to expand support for the installation of solar PV at schools across North Carolina.

This model will give financial support to schools that cannot afford a system and/or take advantage of tax credits. It will also enable NC GreenPower to continue education and awareness efforts around renewable energy in communities across the state and provide solar technology and curriculum as additional educational tools for both educators and students in North Carolina.



## Eligible Applicants

Public and private K-12 schools that are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) or 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code are eligible to apply for the NC GreenPower Solar Schools pilot. The pilot is open to all NC K-12 schools.

We expect that the applicant will have the ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of solar technology across a broad range of subject areas/classes. The applicant must own the property on which the project will be installed or have prior approval from the property owner when applying. **The applicant should not already have solar photovoltaic (PV) technology installed on the property.**

Schools must be located in North Carolina and must be served by one of these North Carolina electric utilities:

- Investor-owned utilities (Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC, Duke Energy Progress, Inc., or Dominion Energy North Carolina)
- North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives or
- Electricities of North Carolina members

## Evaluation Process and Criteria

All applications will be reviewed by an NC GreenPower Board Committee to determine whether the project and fundraising are feasible at the school. Selections will be made on a number of the following criterion:

- Applicant should not already have solar technology installed on school property.
- Pilot is open to all schools but some preference may be given to those schools in Tier 1 counties, defined by the [NC Department of Commerce as those that are most economically distressed](#). **However, schools in ALL counties are encouraged to apply.** For a list of past recipients, please [visit our website](#).
- Applicant school should be highly motivated to teach about energy and renewables.
- School should be able to demonstrate their ability to integrate the solar PV demonstration project into their curriculum.
- School will be required to do a Post-Installation Solar Evaluation to assess both the environmental and educational benefits from the solar PV system.
- The NC GreenPower Board Review Committee will strive to achieve geographic balance and diversity among grant awardees, if possible.

Applicants who are selected for the Solar Schools pilot will receive an award notice stating the amount of funds to be granted and the required match. Schools should contact their local school boards/commissions in advance of the award notice for approval to participate as



schools will only have 30 days to accept the grant. Schools will have until September 28, 2018 (approximately 25 weeks) to raise the matching funds.

## Funding

NC GreenPower estimates that there will be funding for a minimum of five and up to seven school grants for this year's pilot program. The total number of awards will be dependent on donations made to the program. NC GreenPower will pay for 50% of the project's costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 (whichever is less). The school may raise the remaining balance using our website [my.NCGreenPower.org](http://my.NCGreenPower.org) as a fundraising tool or other method of the school's choosing. **All awarded schools will be required to launch a fundraising campaign through our fundraising website [my.NCGreenPower.org](http://my.NCGreenPower.org).** The State Employees Credit Union (SECU) Foundation will award public schools of their choosing to provide a grant of \$15,000 if the school is successful in raising their funds. Interested schools should apply to NC GreenPower for consideration to receive a 3-5 kW solar PV system; larger systems will be allowed but the schools will need to raise the additional funds to support the effort. There is no separate application for the SECU Foundation grant.

A 5 kW pole-mounted solar array costs approximately \$26,000 - \$35,000. The SECU Foundation will select certain public schools to receive a \$15,000 grant; preference may be given to those schools in Tier 1 counties. The balance of the system's cost will be funded by the school and NC GreenPower; NC GreenPower will pay 50% of the remaining balance or up to \$10,000, whichever is less. The school will need to raise the balance. For example, let's say the total cost of the solar educational package for your school costs \$30,000. The SECU Foundation may award the school \$15,000 and then the balance due would be \$15,000. NC GreenPower would provide a \$7,500 grant and the school would need to fundraise the balance of \$7,500. Here is another example: if a solar package costs \$35,000, and if the SECU Foundation awarded your school \$15,000, the remaining balance would be \$20,000. NC GreenPower would provide a \$10,000 grant and your school would need to raise \$10,000. If you are not chosen by SECU Foundation to receive their grant, we might consider a smaller 3 kW system to potentially decrease the amount that your school would need to fundraise.

Applicants who are awarded grant funding must demonstrate that matching funds are available, in-hand or otherwise committed before NC GreenPower will begin the installation process. Matching funds may not be in the form of in-kind goods or services. The selected school should self-promote their project and start a fundraising "campaign" through <http://my.ncgreenpower.org>. NC GreenPower will assist in marketing fundraising campaigns launched on [my.NCGreenPower.org](http://my.NCGreenPower.org) through social media channels and at events to help the school with raising funds and awareness. We will also provide the schools with a fundraising flier, an A-frame sign to display at school events and various other tools to assist with the fundraising efforts. The online crowd-source funding campaign will make it easy for communities to contribute funds to support the renewable project at the school. For all funds



raised or obtained by the schools through the online campaign, grants, sponsorships or other means, NC GreenPower will retain a small percentage (10%) to cover program costs as directed by the NC GreenPower Board of Directors; the remaining funds will be used to support the solar PV system at the school. Donations to NC GreenPower are non-refundable, tax-deductible and will be used to support only in-state projects.

If a school does not raise enough funds, it may have options such as extending their fundraising deadline by a single 30 day extension, decreasing the size of the solar PV system to reduce project costs, or donating the money raised to another school's fund of their choice or of NC GreenPower's choice. Additional options may be available to assist a school in its fundraising efforts.

If a school exceeds its fundraising goals, the school may use the additional funds to increase the size of the solar PV system; have NC GreenPower purchase additional curriculum, kits or learning tools on their behalf; pay NC GreenPower or a contractor to provide energy efficiency consulting/upgrades; or donate the funds to another school that is raising money for an NC GreenPower solar PV project.

Schools that are awarded grant funding can start campaigns on the [my.NCGreenPower.org](http://my.NCGreenPower.org) website but only one campaign can be started per project. Projects are not eligible for NC GreenPower incentives (REC agreement) and all campaigns and projects must be authorized by NC GreenPower.

## Application Process

NC GreenPower, in its sole and absolute discretion, may accept or reject an application for any reason. Please submit the completed NC GreenPower Solar Schools application via the below Google Form link by 5:00 PM EST on Wednesday, February 28, 2018. Questions should be emailed to NC GreenPower at: [solarschools@ncgreenpower.org](mailto:solarschools@ncgreenpower.org) and applicants should state in the subject heading of the email "**Solar Schools Pilot Question – insert school name.**"

To apply for the NC GreenPower Solar Schools grant please [click here](#).

## Site Selection

The NC GreenPower Solar Schools Pilot Program is currently installing top-of-pole mounted systems, ranging from 10 to 17 panels (3 kW - 5 kW) on one or two galvanized steel poles. However, roof-mounted arrays may be considered if they can be installed in prominent, visible locations at the school (e.g. front of the school).

NC GreenPower's engineer will assist the school with the site selection for the solar PV installation. An ideal location will maximize solar energy production, have good visibility of the array for both the public and the school, have convenient access to an electrical connection



and ensure safety to the students. Based on these criteria, and considering the school's preferences, NC GreenPower reserves the right to make the final decision for the location of the solar installation.

## Installation and Management Process

NC GreenPower will choose a qualified installer and manage the installation process for the awarded school. To increase reliability and reduce maintenance requirements, the solar PV system should be grid-tied and should not be battery-based.

System installation must begin within ninety (90) days of fundraising deadline. If solar PV system construction or installation occurs before application acceptance, then NC GreenPower may, in its sole and absolute discretion, determine that the applicant's system is ineligible. In such event, NC GreenPower shall have no obligation to make any grant payment to or on behalf of the applicant.

A school staff member(s) should also be trained by NC GreenPower or the qualified contractor to be the primary providers of operation/maintenance (O&M) services; O&M services should be minimal and having trained staff will save the school the expense of hiring a contractor except for more serious issues. The goal will be to raise an extra \$2,500 (\$500 x 5 years) so that expenses for O&M are covered after the project installation.

NC GreenPower will hold all contributions and funds raised by the school to pay the contractor upon satisfactorily completing the installation of the solar PV system. Completed projects will permanently display the appropriate signage/recognition of NC GreenPower and any corporate sponsors who donated to support the project.

## Curriculum

NC GreenPower will provide NEED.org educational materials on solar PV for the schools to fully maximize the benefit of having the system as a teaching tool. The developed curriculum will consist of appropriate materials to engage both teachers and students in multiple subject areas. All NEED curriculum is approved to meet North Carolina Essential Standards for Science as adopted by the NC Department of Public Instruction. The curriculum may include information on other renewable energy sources as the program may expand beyond solar PV in the future. NC GreenPower will also provide curricula training to educators from each awarded school; training will be a mandatory requirement for a minimum of three and up to five teachers per school. Training will be scheduled following the completion of fundraising. Educators will be required to provide feedback and recommendations on curriculum semi-annually through the school year so continuous program improvements can be made.



## Timeline

The following are dates associated with the NC GreenPower Solar Schools pilot:

Application period opens .....	January 2, 2018
Applications due to NC GreenPower .....	February 28, 2018 by 5:00 PM
NC GreenPower Board Committee review .....	March 1 – March 30, 2018
NC GreenPower notifies selected schools .....	April 6, 2018
Deadline for school’s acceptance of award .....	May 4, 2018
NC GreenPower announces selected schools.....	May 11, 2018
School Site Walks with Solar Installers .....	June 11 – June 19, 2018
Deadline for school to have matching funds .....	September 28, 2018
Extended fundraising deadline, if requested.....	October 31, 2018
Expected date for solar PV to be installed by .....	April 30, 2019