

Applicant Guidelines

The Spark! Fund is available to help catalyze community-based energy projects with quantifiable education and energy savings outcomes on Maine's 15 year-round islands and coastal communities by offering mini-grants between \$250 and \$2,000. Please read the following guidelines carefully to ensure that your project application meets the criteria.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include entities with an Employee Identification Number, such as:

- Local energy groups, teams, or committees
- Non-profits and community associations
- Schools
- Municipalities
- Power Companies
- Businesses

Applicants will be required to provide a W-9 form in order for funds to be released.

Eligible Projects

Projects supported by the Spark! Fund are required to have an educational component that increases public understanding of the project or topic, as well as quantifiable savings outcomes from avoided energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Projects must be located within an Maine island or coastal community. In addition, applicants must demonstrate community support for the initiative in the form of funding, in-kind donations of time or materials, and/or statements of support. **For-profit businesses must provide cash match for their applications.**

Possible uses of the funds include:

- Community engagement on energy projects, including expenses related to informational sessions (e.g., signage, handouts, space rental, refreshments, etc.)
- Field trips to study energy efficiency or renewable energy projects
- Registration fees and/or travel to attend conferences or trainings
- Energy investigation tools (e.g., Kill-A-Watt meters, eMonitors)
- Professional energy consulting services (e.g., building energy audits, renewable energy resource assessments, technical design review)
- Materials to make interior storm window inserts or other DIY energy-saving projects
- Purchase of energy-saving and educational devices (e.g., smart power strips, motion sensing light switches, programmable thermostats, etc.)
- Purchase of energy-efficient products (e.g., LEDs, appliances)

- Insulation and air sealing services for community buildings, homes, and businesses

In addition, the Island Institute offers a variety of workshops, trainings, and project modules (such as the Weatherization Week model) through Spark! Fund. For more information and project ideas, see the *Spark! Fund Trainings* list included with the Spark! Fund application materials.

Ineligible Project Expenses: Indirect costs, general operating budget, and fringe costs are ineligible for expenditure of Spark! Funds. Contact [Harry Podolsky](#) with any questions.

Project Assistance

The Island Institute's Community Energy team is available to assist teams with project development, implementation, reporting, and to help leverage other funding opportunities.

Award Amounts and Application Process

Applicants may apply for awards between \$250 and \$2,000. Applicants can apply for up to two awards per year, for a maximum of \$4,000 per year. Teams must fully complete the Spark! Fund Application in order to be considered for funding. We encourage applicants to contact Institute staff to discuss project ideas in advance of applying to ensure that various criteria will be met.

Application Deadlines

Applications will be accepted quarterly: **October 1, December 1, March 1, and June 1.**

Applications must be submitted electronically by 5:00 p.m. on or before the deadline.

Applicants will be notified within 30 days of the deadline they applied to regarding the status of their application. Contact [Harry Podolsky](#) if you require assistance on your application.

Criteria for Evaluation & Guidelines

Project proposals should:

1. Describe a compelling need and benefits to the entire community;
2. Describe a plan for community outreach;
3. Demonstrate plans to sustain the project after the funding cycle ends if applicable;
4. Provide short-term and long-term measureable educational and environmental benefits;
5. Describe project links to a community's major energy issues; and
6. Include a thorough budget using the included spreadsheet, outlining descriptions of any matching funds and/or in-kind support.

Reporting

Funded projects will be expected to provide a one-page summary report and summary of realized and projected savings within 60 days of completion of the project or within one year of the award date. The Island Institute will provide a form for summarizing impacts.

Please contact Harry Podolsky, Community Energy Associate at the Island Institute, with any questions about your application: hpodolsky@islandinstitute.org; (207) 594-9209 ext.