



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Renewable Energy Grant Application

PLEASE NOTE: *It is recommended that congregations interested in pursuing this grant be in communication with the synod's Care of Creation Ministry Team (email: CreationCareTeam@sepa.org) as early as possible in their process of completing the grant application below. The reasons for this are two-fold: 1) to maximize the amount of the IRS direct pay benefit and/or utility refund the congregation receives following completion of the project; and, 2) to ensure the completeness of the congregation's grant application, especially considering the tight timeline indicated below.*

Purpose: The synod allocated \$50,000 to help congregations install renewable energy. Care of Creation Ministry Team will administer the Renewable Energy Grant Program. This grant money will be allocated among the selected applications. The intention is that the grant money will be returned to the synod when federal direct pay or utility refunds are received so that the funds can become available for future projects. Congregations are required to file for direct pay benefits with the IRS.

Eligibility:

All congregations within the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod are eligible.

Timelines:

The timeline for the process is as follows:

The program opens for applications on February 1st, 2026.
Application Deadline is June 30th, 2026.

It is recommended that congregations submit their application as early as possible in the submission period (i.e., prior to June 15th, 2026) so that the Care of Creation Ministry Team can work with congregations to resolve any issues with the application in advance of the June 30, 2026, submission deadline.

PLEASE NOTE: For renewable energy projects eligible for the Federal Direct Pay benefit through the Inflation Reduction Act, it is important not to fall into an “excessive benefit” pitfall that would reduce the tax benefit expected back from the government. All money, including this grant, which is specifically raised for the renewable energy project cannot be larger than the project cost minus the expected tax benefit without jeopardizing the amount of the tax benefit. The initial money for the amount expected back from the government can come from general funds, loans, or an unspecified grant. Contact CreationCareTeam@sepa.org if clarification is needed.

Submission Process:

Congregations seeking a grant should complete the attached application form and submit it, along with a price quote from the selected vendor, via email to: CreationCareTeam@sepa.org (Care of Creation Ministry Team, Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod).

Selection Criteria:

The Care of Creation Ministry Team will use the following criteria, in order of importance:

- 1) The project must be a renewable energy project that the congregation expects to install and place into service in 2026-27 whereupon the congregation would file required paperwork with the IRS to receive direct pay benefit from the federal government.
- 2) The project must be "shovel ready," meaning that the full approval from the congregation and the scope and cost of the project is well defined and can proceed upon receipt of the grant.
- 3) Priority will be given to projects where the grant is essential to the ability to proceed with the project.

Results of Selection Process:

- 1) All applicant congregations will be notified that their project has been either:
 - a. Selected and awarded a grant.
 - b. The application does not meet the Selection Criteria of the grant program.
 - c. Meets the selection criteria but was not selected.
- 2) Congregations selected to receive a grant will be sent a check within 30 days of their being notified of the award. A congregation wishing to receive their award check at a different time can make that request to the Care of Creation Ministry Team at the time the congregation is notified that it has been selected to receive a grant.

Reporting Requirements

Each congregation receiving a Renewable Energy grant must submit the following three notifications to the Care of Creation Ministry Team: CreationCareTeam@sepa.org.

- Please email the date of "permission to operate" within 30 days of receipt.
- Please provide a copy of documentation received from the IRS pertaining to the Federal Direct Pay benefit payment and/or from a utility related to any grants received.
- Please mail a completed Renewable Energy Grant Report (see page 6), along with intended repayment check to the synod (within 30 days of direct pay benefit receipt). Please make the check payable to "SEPA Synod" and on the Memo line write, Renewable Energy Fund. ATTN: Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant.

Additionally, please share any renewable energy announcements or celebrations with the Care of Creation Ministry Team so those successes can be further amplified!

SEPA Synod Renewable Energy Grant Application

Complete and submit to:

Care of Creation Ministry Team

Email: CreationCareTeam@sepa.org

For assistance in completing this application, please contact

CreationCareTeam@sepa.org

Congregation Name:

Address:

Phone Number: ____-____-____ Email:

Conference (include county if different than the conference):

Pastor (Name, Pronouns, Email):

Project Name:

Project Leader(s):

Person 1 (Name, Pronouns, Email, Phone):

Person 2 (optional) (Name, Pronouns, Email, Phone):

Type of project: Solar Geothermal Wind

Installed cost of Renewable Energy Project: \$ _____ (please attach quote)

Is the congregation/project claiming the following 10% bonus adders?

- Energy Community
- Domestic Content (confirmed by installer)
- Already approved for Low-income adder

Has the project already received all necessary congregational approvals?

- YES, please provide (1) the minutes from the Congregation Council meeting at which the project was approved; and, (2) the minutes from the Congregation meeting at which the project was approved.
- NO, investigating funding options [NOTE: a congregation selected to receive a grant, will not be sent the award check until the project has received all necessary congregational approvals.]

Has the congregation signed the contract with the installer? If not, when will the congregation sign?

Does the equipment meet the Foreign Entities of Concern rules to be eligible for Elective Pay (may require documentation from the installer)?

What funds does the congregation already have to proceed with the project?

| | |
|---|----------|
| General funds/Endowment: | \$ _____ |
| Fundraised specifically for renewable energy: | \$ _____ |
| Additional grants specific to renewable energy: | \$ _____ |
| Unspecified grants: | \$ _____ |

If all funds are not available, what is the additional amount needed for the project to proceed?

Requested grant amount: \$ _____

When does the congregation expect to install the system?

___/___/___

Please provide any additional information you would like the Care of Creation Ministry Team to consider when acting upon this application.



**SEPA Synod Care of Creation Ministry
Grant Funding Determination**

Status: Approved

Approved by: _____

Approval Date: ___/___/_____

Approved amount: \$ _____.

Needs Modification

Please make the following Modifications and resubmit:

Not selected

Ineligible for funding



**SEPA Synod Care of Creation Ministry
Renewable Energy Grant Report**

Date Report Submitted: ___/___/_____

*(This report is to be submitted **within 30 days of receipt of direct pay funds.**)*

Church Name and Address:

Contact Name, Phone Number, and Email:

Project Name:

Grant Funding Received: \$_____.

Amount of Grant Returned: \$ _____.

(The returned amount needs to be sent to the Renewable Energy Fund. Please write a check payable to "SEPA Synod" and on the Memo line write, Renewable Energy Fund ATTN: Mr. Martin Schwab, Senior Accountant.)

[Email this report to the Care of Creation Ministry Team: CreationCareTeam@sepa.org.]