



Review and Selection Process

On June 28, 2023, EPA released the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Solar for All (SFA). On July 14, 2023, EPA released the respective NOFOs for the National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF) and Clean Communities Investment Accelerator (CCIA). Each NOFO included a robust set of application requirements and corresponding evaluation criteria that were used to assess materials submitted to meet those application requirements. Application requirements covered a diverse set of topics and included not just a detailed project narrative but also a robust set of application attachments. Application attachments differed based on each program's unique requirements and may have included, for example, organizational and governing documents; resumes of board members and senior management; legal and compliance risk management policies and procedures; financial statements; workplans for the first year of program implementations, and budget narratives. Application requirements are described in Section IV.B: Application Materials of each respective NOFOs.

To evaluate each application in accordance with Section V.B: Review and Selection Process of each respective NOFO as well as the requirements of [EPA Order 5700.5A1: EPA's Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements](#), EPA designed a multi-staged review and selection process for each program.

Throughout the multi-staged review and selection process for each program, EPA ensured that applications were reviewed and scored in accordance with a process that was robust, consistent, and ethical.

- **Robust:** EPA disclosed 72 evaluation criteria for the NCIF and 62 evaluation criteria for the CCIA in the respective Notices of Funding Opportunity, with each evaluation criterion scored out of 10 to 40 points possible and summing to 1,000 points possible. Each of these evaluation criteria were reviewed and scored by at least three reviewers, with the median score across these reviewers used to reduce the impact of outlier scores. EPA applied the same scoring design to the interviews, which included 4 additional evaluation criteria that were each scored out of 10 to 15 points possible (as disclosed to top-ranked applicants prior to the interviews) and summing to 50 points possible.
- EPA disclosed 38 evaluation criteria for Solar for All in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, with each evaluation criterion scored out of 3 to 10 points possible and summing to 245 points possible. The median score for each individual criterion was used to reduce the impact of outlier scores amongst reviewers.
- **Consistent:** EPA ensured that each application was evaluated in accordance with Section V: Application Review Information of the respective NOFOs - and that implementation of the review and selection process was consistent across applications. The expert review panels reviewed and scored the same set of evaluation criteria across every eligible application - after having been through a

rigorous series of trainings on the program requirements and the evaluation criteria for which they were responsible. For NCIF and CCIA, a senior career official served as panel chair for all of the review panels to drive consistency in implementation. For Solar for All, a select small group of EPA career employees, each with demonstrated experience managing grant competitions, served as panel chairs for the review process. The panel chairs each managed multiple panels, attended dedicated training on the process, and met weekly with the Office of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to ensure consistency.

- **Ethical:** EPA ensured that each program’s process met the highest ethical standards through conflict-of-interest, ethics, and other checks.
- EPA required all reviewers to complete a conflict-of-interest review, an ethics review, and a non-disclosure agreement, each subject to penalty. Potential reviewers were screened out in advance of evaluating applications even due to minor issues that could lead to a real or perceived conflict or ethics issue. Additionally, EPA conducted a full review of the confidential financial disclosures for all Senior Review Team members prior to their participation.

Selections under all three programs were made in April 2024, and funds were obligated to grant recipients in late summer 2024. To learn more about the program-specific review and selection processes, visit the [Review and Selection Process for NCIF and CCIA](#) page and the [Review and Selection Process for Solar for All](#) page.

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