

October 2, 2023

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
Bureau of Energy and Technology Policy
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Attn: Clean Energy Calculator

Acadia Center appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Connecticut Clean Energy & Connectivity Incentives Calculator. Please see the following responses to DEEP's identified questions:

1. Should DEEP include any additional core tool functions or features as part of this RFP's scope of work?

To ensure this tool is inclusive to as many residents and encourages transition from tool utilization to actual increases in clean energy upgrades, the tool should allow users to indicate if they are tenants or landlords of a property. The RFP mentions that the users will be able to indicate property ownership. However, building in a feature for tenants to complete the calculator and directly send the results to their landlord with a link to register for the tool, including the tenant results could be beneficial. This data should be collected to identify any strengths and weaknesses associated with the existing clean energy programs supporting tenants and landlords through these upgrades. Additionally, it would be helpful to have data on the points at which users engaged and proceeded with associated upgrades to identify any drop-off rates from the tool. A profile system could be developed to keep users' information reloadable for any future incentives, changes to status, and facilitate interactions with landlords and tenants.

3. DEEP wants this tool to be as accessible as possible for a wide variety of audiences. However, building out accessibility characteristics (e.g., offering the tool in multiple languages, optimizing mobile device viewing, etc.) will increase the tool's development timeline. Should DEEP permit a developer to launch a beta version of the tool that does not yet have all accessibility characteristics completed? Would it be acceptable to phase in accessibility characteristics over a specified period?

Accessibility characteristics should be built into the beta version of the tool. This will ensure adequate prioritization of features that often serve as barriers of entry to tools and initiatives that promote energy justice. If the tool is to be released in phases, there should be adequate beta testing and public input sessions for the added accessibility characteristics of the tool. In the beta testing, it would be helpful to include a list of upcoming accessibility features and any associated timeline. Additionally, as public input sessions are initiated, opportunities to identify new accessibility features should be available to those providing comments.

4. The draft RFP currently lists key tool audiences as including the following communities:

- Connecticut residents
- Low-income residents

Are there other key audiences, or audience subcategories, that the RFP should explicitly include for feedback and/or tool testing?

- Residents of environmental justice communities and distressed municipalities
- Residents in multi-family housing; including tenants and landlords
- Community-based organizations in environmental justice communities and distressed municipalities
- Community groups, nonprofit organizations, and municipalities involved in the [Community Partnership Initiative](#)

7. The draft RFP allows respondents to propose an outreach/marketing campaign. Should DEEP outline specific requirements for such a campaign?

Outreach and marketing campaigns for the Connecticut Clean Energy & Connectivity Incentives Calculator should ensure proper prioritization in environmental justice communities and distressed municipalities. Outreach and marketing campaigns in these communities should include collaborations with identified community-based organizations. A high-traffic outreach and marketing campaign might consist of tabling, pamphlets in multiple languages, webinars, and advertisements on public transportation. Data should be collected from the outreach and marketing campaigns to identify strengths and weaknesses with the designed approach.

9. Three years down the road, what would signal that the Connecticut Clean Energy & Connectivity Incentives Calculator has succeeded? What would signal that it has not? portal.ct.gov/DEEP

There are opportunities to align the success of the Connecticut Clean Energy & Connectivity Incentives Calculator with that of the [Justice40 initiative](#). A target percentage of users who went through each step of available incentive upgrades, as indicated by the tool, would be a great start. Aligning with the Justice40 initiative would target at least 40% of users living in environmental justice communities to complete available upgrades with the identified incentives. Success for the calculator should include continued engagement and tool usage, with a particular focus on environmental justice communities.

10. What other feedback would you offer DEEP and the calculator advisory team regarding the draft RFP?

Applicants to develop the tool through the RFP should have demonstrated experience working with and in diverse communities, environmental justice communities, and/or distressed municipalities. There is also an opportunity to encourage applications from groups that embrace diversity and inclusion within their organization.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

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