

2024 appropriation. Should the fees need to be adjusted after passage of the FY 2024 appropriations, the agency will publish a subsequent notice in the **Federal Register**.

DATES: The fees in this notice are effective October 1, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information specific to this notice contact Michele Brooks, Director, Regulations Management, Rural Development Innovation Center—

Regulations Management, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250–1522. Telephone: (202) 690–1078. Email: michele.brooks@usda.gov. For information regarding implementation, contact your respective Rural Development State Office listed here: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/browse-state>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As set forth in 7 CFR part 5001, the Agency is

authorized to charge a guarantee fee, a periodic guarantee retention fee, a fee for the issuance of the loan note guarantee prior to construction completion and establish a loan guarantee percentage for guaranteed loans made under this rule. Pursuant to this and other applicable authority, and subject to the current appropriated authority, the Agency is establishing the following for FY 2024:

Loan type	Guarantee fee (%)	Periodic guarantee retention fee (%)	Loan guarantee percentage (%)	Fee for issuance of loan note guarantee prior to construction completion (%)
B&I	3.00	0.55	80	0.50
B&I Reduced Fee	1.0	0.50	80	0.50
B&I project in a high cost, isolated rural area of the State of Alaska that is not connected to a road system	1.0	0.50	90	0.50
CF	1.25	0.50	80	0.50
REAP	1.0	0.25	80	0.50
WWD	1.0	N/A	80	0.50

The initial guarantee fee is paid at the time the loan note guarantee is issued. The periodic guarantee retention fee is paid by the lender to the Agency once a year. Payment of the periodic guarantee retention fee is required in order to maintain the enforceability of the guarantee. The fee for issuance of the loan note guarantee prior to construction completion DOES NOT apply to all construction loans. This additional fee only applies to loans requesting to receive a loan note guarantee prior to project completion. For loans where the loan note guarantee is issued between October 1 and December 31, the first periodic retention fee payment is due January 31 of the second year following the date the loan note guarantee was issued.

Unless precluded by a subsequent FY 2024 appropriation, these rates will apply to all guaranteed loans obligated in FY 2024. The amount of the periodic retention fee on each guaranteed loan will be determined by multiplying the periodic retention fee rate by the outstanding principal loan balance as of December 31, multiplied by the percentage of guarantee.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA Programs are

prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or contact USDA through the 711 Relay Service. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form, AD–3027, *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form*, which can be obtained online at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632–9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil

rights violation. The completed AD–3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) *Mail:* U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250–9410; or

(2) *Fax:* (833) 256–1665 or (202) 690–7442; or

(3) *Email:* program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Xochitl Torres Small,

Undersecretary, Rural Development.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) Program

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; announcement of the opening of the online application window for the PACE Program.

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service, a Rural Development agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), hereinafter referred to as “RUS” or “the Agency” announced its intent to solicit Letters of Interest (LOI) for loan applications under the Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) Program in a Notice of Funding

Opportunity (NOFO) on May 16, 2023, in the **Federal Register**. In addition, the NOFO also announced the application process for those loans and provided deadlines for applications from eligible entities. Loans will be made to qualified PACE Applicants to finance power generation projects for Renewable Energy Resource (RER) Systems or Energy Storage Systems that support RER Projects. This Notice announces a new opening date for PACE LOI submissions as well as an update on how to submit an LOI and additional information that must be submitted.

DATES: The Agency will begin accepting LOIs for the PACE Program beginning at 11:59 a.m. Eastern Time (ET) on July 10, 2023, and until 11:59 p.m. ET on September 29, 2023.

ADDRESSES: All LOIs must be submitted to RUS electronically at www.grants.gov. Additional information and resources are available at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/powering-affordable-clean-energy-pace-program>. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 funding for Rural Development website is located at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/inflation-reduction-act>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Christopher McLean, Assistant Administrator, Electric Program, Rural Utilities Service, Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, STOP 1568, Washington, DC 20250–1560; Telephone: 202–690–4492. Email to: SM.RD.RUS.IRA.Questions@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: The PACE Program is authorized under Section 22001 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Public Law 117–169.

Overview

Federal Awarding Agency Name: Rural Utilities Service.

Funding Opportunity Title: Powering Affordable Clean Energy (PACE) Program.

Announcement Type: Announcement of the Opening of the On-Line Application Window for the PACE Program.

Assistance Listing Number: 10.757.

Funding Opportunity Number: RUS–PACE–2023.

LOI Submission Information: RUS will accept electronic submission of LOIs through *Grants.gov*. RUS will not accept paper, facsimile, or email transmission.

I. Background

On August 16, 2022, The Biden Harris Administration and the United State Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 which authorized the PACE Program. The goal of the PACE Program is to support clean, affordable energy growth across America by providing loans to eligible entities, with varying levels of loan forgiveness, for projects that generate and/or store electricity from RER.

On May 16, 2023, the Agency published a NOFO in the **Federal Register** (88 FR 31232) that solicited LOIs for loan applications under the PACE Program and announced the application process for those loans as well as provided deadlines for applications from eligible entities. The NOFO also informed potential Applicants that the Agency would finalize the specific requirements of submitting an LOI through the on-line application window by a separate notice in the **Federal Register** and on the RUS website at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/powering-affordable-clean-energy-pace-program>. In response to stakeholder requests, RUS is pushing back the opening date for accepting LOI submissions from June 30, 2023, to July 10, 2023, to provide stakeholders more time to prepare their LOIs.

II. Letter of Interest Requirements and Submission

A. Letter of Interest Requirements

The Agency has added the requirement to submit an Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) to the list of items needed for a complete LOI in order to accept the LOI's through *Grants.gov*. In addition to the SF 424, Applicants will still be required to provide the information included in Section D.1(a) of the NOFO that published in the **Federal Register** on May 16, 2023, (88 FR 31232). The RUS PACE website will include an LOI Guide at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/powering-affordable-clean-energy-pace-program>. The LOI Guide will provide details on the submission of the LOI on *Grants.gov*, including how to provide attachments. In addition, the LOI Guide will detail how Applicants must use the RUS geospatial mapping tool to draw the service areas associated with each PACE project and then upload Shapefiles to *Grants.gov* as part of an LOI Application. The LOI Guide will also indicate where to attach the additional requirements for the LOI, such as a copy of the Applicant's balance sheet and income statements.

B. Letter of Interest Submission

1. Application of General Assistance. Prior to official submission of an LOI, Applicants may request general assistance from the Agency if such requests are made prior to September 22, 2023. The Agency may provide general assistance as it is able, and Applicants may request assistance in the form of general assistance and consultation with an RUS GFR. Please note that RUS GFRs shall not provide strategic submission or strategic LOI advice, and Applicants are fully responsible for their submissions. Assistance may also be requested to Agency staff in the form of requests to speak at meetings, events, and conferences to explain program provisions and answer questions about this funding announcement. Responses to questions regarding program provisions and this funding announcement will be posted to the PACE FAQ page. Information on contacting an RUS GFR can be found at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/electric-gfr>. For requests regarding speaking engagements, please email: SM.RD.RUS.IRA.Questions@usda.gov.

2. Letters of Interest Submission Deadlines: The Agency will begin accepting LOIs for the PACE Program beginning at 11:59 a.m. ET on July 10, 2023, and until 11:59 p.m. ET on September 29, 2023.

The LOIs must be submitted electronically thru www.grants.gov. The PACE funding opportunity in *Grants.gov* can be found by searching for the funding opportunity number found in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this Notice. Please review the *Grants.gov* website at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html> for instructions on the process of registering an organization as soon as possible to ensure that all electronic application deadlines are met. *Grants.gov* will not accept applications submitted after the deadline.

III. Program Requirements

To be eligible for an award, applications must meet all of the requirements contained in the NOFO published in the **Federal Register** on May 16, 2023, at 88 FR 31232. Information can also be found at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/electric-programs/powering-affordable-clean-energy-pace-program>.

Andrew Berke,
Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.

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