



Program Guidelines

Administered by the PA Route 6 Alliance in Partnership with the West Penn Energy Fund with support funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Program Overview

The PA Route 6 Energy Mini Grant Program assists small businesses, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and community organizations with investments that reduce energy costs and improve building efficiency.

The program supports the continued use and revitalization of existing and historic buildings while strengthening local economies, lowering operating expenses, and encouraging environmental stewardship throughout the Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor.

Program Goals

The program seeks to:

- Reduce energy consumption and electric utility costs.
 - Encourage reinvestment in existing commercial and community buildings.
 - Preserve historic structures through energy-efficient improvements.
 - Promote renewable energy and innovative technologies.
 - Support sustainable economic development.
 - Leverage private investment through matching funds.
 - Demonstrate successful projects that can be replicated throughout the Route 6 corridor.
 - Build local capacity through education and technical assistance.
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Funding Available

- Grant awards range from **\$1,000 to \$20,000**.
- Applications received by September 1, 2026 will be reviewed competitively.
- After September 1, 2026 applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling, competitive basis until all available funds have been committed or exhausted.
- Total funding is subject to program allocations.
- The PA Route 6 Alliance reserves the right to award less than the amount requested based on program priorities, application competitiveness, and available funds.

Matching Requirement

A 1:1 cash match is encouraged but not required.

Projects providing higher matching contributions, additional leveraged funding, or documented in-kind professional services may receive additional scoring consideration. All matching contributions must directly support the approved project.

Geographic Eligibility

Projects must be located in McKean or Potter Counties and have impact in both areas:

1. The Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor
2. The West Penn Energy Fund (WPEF) [service area](#)

To maximize regional impact, the PA Route 6 Alliance and the West Penn Energy Fund may also consider geographic distribution when making awards. Priority may be given to projects located in downtown business districts, historic commercial areas, designated revitalization districts, or communities demonstrating economic need and readiness for investment.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Small businesses
- Commercial property owners
- Nonprofit organizations
- Municipalities
- Community organizations
- Heritage organizations
- Main Street organizations
- Downtown associations

Applicants must own the property or provide written authorization from the property owner.

Eligible Properties

Eligible properties include:

- Commercial buildings
- Mixed-use buildings
- Nonprofit facilities
- Community buildings
- Municipal buildings

- Historic buildings
 - Existing occupied or vacant buildings intended for productive reuse
 - Residential-only properties are not eligible.
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Eligible Projects

Projects must improve building energy performance or reduce operating costs.

Examples include:

- LED lighting upgrades
 - HVAC improvements or replacement
 - Heat pumps
 - Smart thermostats and building controls
 - Energy management systems
 - Commercial refrigeration and kitchen efficiency upgrades
 - ENERGY STAR® equipment and appliances
 - Insulation and air sealing
 - Energy-efficient windows and exterior doors
 - Historic window restoration with energy improvements
 - Professional energy audits and assessments
 - Small-scale solar demonstration projects
 - Innovative demonstration projects that educate the public about energy efficiency
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Ineligible Projects

The following are not eligible:

- Routine maintenance
 - Cosmetic improvements only
 - Landscaping
 - New construction
 - Residential-only properties
 - Land acquisition
 - Debt repayment
 - Work started before grant approval
 - Operating expenses
 - Inventory
 - General office equipment unrelated to energy savings
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Technical Assistance

The PA Route 6 Alliance provides technical assistance including:

- Pre-application consultations
 - Project planning assistance
 - Funding coordination
 - Referrals to qualified energy professionals
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Energy Efficiency & Design Standards

The PA Route 6 Alliance encourages energy-efficient improvements that preserve the architectural character, historic integrity, and scenic qualities of communities along the Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor. Whenever possible, projects should be compatible with the age, style, and character of the building while incorporating sustainable technologies that reduce long-term operating costs.

Lighting

Lighting improvements should maximize energy efficiency while minimizing light pollution and protecting the region's exceptional night skies.

Projects should:

- Install high-efficiency LED fixtures for interior and exterior applications.
 - Use Dark Sky Friendly fixtures that direct light downward and minimize glare and light trespass.
 - Select fully shielded fixtures that conceal the light source from direct view.
 - Use LED lighting (3000 Kelvin or lower) whenever practical.
 - Install timers, photocells, dimmers, or motion sensors to reduce unnecessary energy use.
 - Choose fixtures that complement the building's architectural style and historic character.
 - Direct sign lighting only onto the sign face.
 - Avoid flashing lights, excessive illumination, exposed bulbs, and fixtures that create glare or the illusion of movement.
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Building Envelope

Projects should improve building energy performance while maintaining historic character whenever possible.

Eligible improvements include:

- Air sealing and weatherization
 - Attic, wall, basement, and roof insulation
 - Energy-efficient window restoration or replacement, when appropriate
 - High-performance exterior doors
 - Other improvements that reduce heating and cooling losses
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Mechanical Systems

Eligible projects may include installation or replacement of high-efficiency systems such as:

- ENERGY STAR® equipment
 - High-efficiency HVAC systems
 - Heat pumps
 - High-efficiency boilers and water heaters
 - Smart thermostats and energy management controls
 - Variable-speed motors and efficient ventilation systems
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Historic Buildings

For historic or contributing buildings, significant architectural features should be preserved whenever feasible. Original windows, doors, masonry, decorative elements, and other character-defining features should be repaired whenever practical before replacement is considered.

Applicants are encouraged to follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Renewable Energy

Renewable energy projects should be appropriately scaled and designed to minimize impacts on historic resources.

Eligible activities include:

- Small-scale solar demonstration projects
 - Renewable energy assessments
 - Other renewable technologies approved by the PA Route 6 Alliance and the West Penn Energy Fund
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Sustainability

Projects that incorporate multiple sustainable practices may receive additional consideration during the review process.

Examples include:

- Dark Sky Friendly lighting
- Renewable energy technologies
- Water conservation measures
- Durable, sustainable building materials
- Adaptive reuse of existing buildings
- Integration with downtown revitalization or community development initiatives

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate measurable reductions in energy consumption, operating costs, and greenhouse gas emissions while preserving community character.

Award Process

1. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted.
 2. Applications are reviewed for eligibility and completeness.
 3. Eligible applications are evaluated using the scoring criteria.
 4. Funding recommendations receive final approval from the PA Route 6 Alliance and West Penn Energy Fund.
 5. Grant agreements are executed before work begins.
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Project Timeline

Projects are generally expected to:

- Begin within 60 days of award.
- Be completed within 12 months unless an extension is approved.
- Submit reimbursement documentation within 30 days of project completion.

Payment

Payment schedules will be outlined as per an executed grant agreement. Recipients must:

- Complete the approved work.
- Submit paid invoices and proof of payment.
- Provide before-and-after photographs.
- Complete all final reporting requirements.

Reporting Requirements

Final reporting requirements and the deadline for submission will be established in the grant agreement. Final documentation must be submitted and approved prior to release of the final reimbursement payment. Recipients must submit:

- Final project report
- Before-and-after photographs
- Paid invoices
- Proof of payment
- Estimated energy savings
- Utility cost savings, when available
- Project outcomes
- Publicity photographs

Recipients may also be asked to participate in future program evaluations.

Recognition

Recipients agree to acknowledge support from the PA Route 6 Alliance and the West Penn Energy Fund in project publicity.

The PA Route 6 Alliance may photograph completed projects and use project information in publications, websites, workshops, social media, presentations, and awards programs.

Program Requirements

Recipients agree to:

- Show proof of registration of proposed project with ACT 129 program.
- Maintain funded improvements for a minimum period established in the grant agreement.
- Comply with all applicable building codes and permit requirements.
- Maintain appropriate insurance.
- Allow site inspections by the PA Route 6 Alliance.
- Submit all required reporting as outlined in executed grant agreement.
- Repay grant funds if program requirements are not fulfilled.

Program Administration

The PA Route 6 Alliance reserves the right to interpret these guidelines, request additional information, modify program requirements, reject any application, or suspend the program if funding availability changes.

All funding decisions are final.

Any questions please contact call the office at 814-435-7706 or email info@paroute6.com