

Community Renewable Energy Grant Program Q&A

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Application

Questions: I'm working with a project that's considering applying, but a portion of the project will rely on funding through a different grant program with a different timeline. Is there any leniency to the requirement that construction projects begin within 12 months, and when will the next opportunity announcements be released?

ODOE Response: Construction projects are required to begin within 12 months of execution of the performance agreement and be completed within 36 months of execution of the performance agreement or a reasonable time frame if good cause to extend the deadline is demonstrated.

[The Oregon Administrative Rules 330-250](#) say, *“Good cause” for extending a timeline agreed upon in a performance agreement means that the grantee failed, or expects to fail, to meet the original deadline due to circumstances beyond the applicant's control, including a significant unforeseeable or uncontrollable circumstance such as supply chain disruptions or delays associated with utility interconnection. Good cause does not include changes to project scope.*

Because you know the timing of both grant programs you are interested in, an extension request may not qualify as “good cause” if you apply knowing that you would likely need an extension, so our recommendation is to apply when the timelines will align.

The next opportunity announcements are currently planned to be released before the end of 2022, with the exact date unknown until we get information from processing the first round of applications.

Question: It appears that the application requires an upload all documents at the same time for each section and cannot be done individually. Can that be fixed?

ODOE Response: An [application user guide](#) is now available on our website. In any section, after you choose documents for upload and click on **Next**, that section’s information is saved, including any documents chosen for upload. If you click **Previous** before you click **Next**, no entries or chosen documents for upload will be saved. Also, if you click **Choose Files** again, before clicking **Next** after selecting files, those selections were not saved. When moving through an application, the only place to see the list of uploaded documents is to proceed through the application to section 11, Review, Sign and Submit. Here you will see the complete list of uploaded documents with an option to view/download by clicking on the document name, or to delete by selecting the down arrow to the right of the document name. The application will remain as draft and fully editable until submitted in section 11.

Questions: We are a non-profit with a community center project seeking to add solar and storage. We are partnering with a city as our “governmental body,” and they support the project and have agreed to submit our application. We are working with a contractor, who acting as a consultant in the application process. Would the non-profit organization “Organization name” under section 2: Applicant Information? Would that then make the city the “Partner Agency?” Or would it be the reverse with city be the “Applicant” and the non-profit be the “Partner?” Should we be listing the contractor as a partner?

ODOE Response: In your example, the city is the Applicant, so their info should be listed in Section 2: Applicant Information. The non-profit would be a partner and should be listed under Section 3: Partner Information. Depending on the relationship with the contractor, you may wish to list their information in Section 4: Consultant/Contractor Information or Section 3: Partner Information.

Question: What documentation validates that solar photovoltaic systems last over 5+ years?

ODOE Response: We would be looking at the description of the project including technical specifications including manufacturer’s information and warranties.

Question: Our community college’s governing body is the Board of Education; however, our president and vice president authorize all grant activity. Given our internal authorization process for grants, would it be acceptable that the written authorization comes from our president rather than the Board of Education?

ODOE Response: The governing body will be different depending on the public body, we would be looking for a letter from the group or individual with authority to make decisions for the public body.

Questions: Can an applicant file two applications in the same grant and same round without affecting scoring of the other? Can applicant group the projects into a single application if the sum of the requested award was under the grant cap? If separate applications per project was required, can a preference for one over the other be stated as to ensure no lost points based on the other?

ODOE Response: An applicant can submit two applications in the same round. The applications will be competitively reviewed, note that one criterion in the scoring criteria listed in the opportunity announcements is geographic diversity. There is not a specific place in the application for an applicant to specify a preference for a project. Without more details regarding the projects, I couldn't say whether they could be submitted under one application or two, but generally a project would need to fit into one of two definitions, either as a community renewable energy project or as a community energy resilience project. As well as meeting other requirements listed in the opportunity announcement.

Question: Please provide the definition of 'environmental justice communities,' 'low income' and 'rural?'

ODOE Response: Environmental Justice communities include communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, tribal communities, rural communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities. We are allowing applicants to demonstrate how their projects are in and/or serve Environmental Justice communities. We have published [list of resources](#) on the program's webpage to assist applicants in this process. The applications will be competitively reviewed with equity criteria being one of the review criteria, you can find more details on the scoring criteria in the [opportunity announcements](#).

Question: Is it permissible to submit more than one grant application from the same organization?

ODOE Response: Yes, an applicant may submit more than one grant application.

Question: Can you provide any guidance on the length of responses and/or application length?

ODOE Response: The Community Renewable Energy Grant Program application online text boxes have a 2000-character limit. An [application user guide](#) is now available on our website. Supporting documents may be uploaded as part of the application and application instructions ask applicants to enter references to the supporting documents in the related online application text boxes.

Question: Could an Oregon charter school, moving into an old public school and putting a new roof on the building apply for a construction grant to apply solar panels to the roof as part of this project?

ODOE Response: Eligible applicants include public bodies as defined by ORS 174.109. In order for a charter school to be considered an eligible applicant, it would need to be a public charter school established under ORS chapter 338.

Question: Is a “renewable resource assessment” the same as a “site evaluation”?

ODOE Response: A renewable resource assessment seeks to identify whether the project would make use of an adequately available renewable energy resource and would need to include a description of the type of resource, how the resource availability was evaluated and estimated, and how the system will ensure access to the resource.

Question: Is there a definition for – or can you provide more guidance – regarding a public body’s “governing body”? For example, can a mayor / director / chair sign a letter of support or does the letter need to come from the full “governing body”?

ODOE Response: The governing body will be different depending on the public body, we would be looking for a letter from the group or individual with authority to make decisions for the public body.

Question: Can one apply for both a planning and construction grant at the same time (round), for the same project? Is it possible to be awarded a planning grant and then, in a subsequent round, a construction grant?

ODOE Response: You may apply for both planning and construction in the same round or apply for a planning grant in one round and a construction grant in another. The applications must demonstrate that the project would meet the specific timelines associated with the opportunity announcement.

Question: Is ODOE expecting the next grant opportunity period to be opened before the end of 2022? Or should communities plan for the grants to open again next year?

ODOE Response: ODOE anticipates opening another round of opportunity announcements before the end of 2022, the precise timeline has not been set yet.

Question: Considering the uncertainty in the market, it is hard to know the specific equipment that will be available at the time of construction. Is it sufficient to describe the technical specifications for the system including nameplate capacity and power, and to share examples of

manufactures information and warranties for equipment that would meet those technical specs even if we are not certain it will be the equipment installed?

ODOE Response: For construction grants, we ask for technical specifications and manufacturer’s warranties, though we are aware availability may change and the equipment may be amended during the project if the project would operate essentially as originally proposed.

Question: How firm does the project cost need to be when the proposal is submitted? Is there an opportunity in the performance agreement to include contingency and use a total not to exceed budget amount contracting framework? That would allow projects to apply for development funds earlier in their lifecycle considering some of the uncertainty in the supply chain and relative lack of experience in the local contractor base for some of the resilient project types.

ODOE Response: For the construction grants, we request anticipated costs in the application and recognize that costs may change. The grant funding awarded cannot increase after a performance agreement is signed, however the applicant may submit an amendment to describe changes in costs or equipment. Prior to distributing grant funds, the applicant will be required to submit CPA certified project costs.

Question: We’re building a new public works campus and we are hoping to include solar plus storage and significant EV infrastructure to support a converted fleet of vehicles. We’re planning on applying for both planning and construction. It’s one campus but we’re trying to figure out how to apply for the different elements. We were planning on applying for solar plus storage in applications and then have separate applications for the EV infrastructure. Does it make sense to do it that way? Or do we need to keep them combined because they are co-located within the same campus?

ODOE Response: The limits on the maximum amount of funds for a grant are tied to the planning or construction of a renewable energy system. If the solar plus storage are paired with the electric vehicle charging stations, then it would be one project and only one application. To be eligible, the electric vehicle charging stations would need to be paired with a renewable energy system that produces energy, so if they are not paired with the solar plus storage system then it would need to be paired with another renewable energy system that produces energy.

Review Process

Question: Because we are planning a small project, we are considering hiring a contractor directly for the design/engineering work (rather than issuing an RFP/RFQ) to reduce costs and time. Would this be disadvantageous in the application scoring process regarding inclusive hiring and equity?

ODOE Response: We do not have any specific requirements relating to competitive procurement of services. An eligible applicant should follow its governing procurement regulations and comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. But you are correct that the information around anticipated hiring/contracting for the project does have competitive scoring criteria as listed in the opportunity announcement.

Question: Can you expand on what is meant by “equity framework” in this context, and/or give an example?

ODOE Response: Organizations that adopt equity frameworks usually do so in ways unique to their organization. One component of the competitive scoring criteria is if an equity framework is used by the applicant to guide development or evaluation of the project. It is not a requirement to submit one.

The rules and opportunity announcements link equity framework to the competitive scoring as directed by the legislation that created this grant program (HB 2021) and includes, “...evaluating the involvement of and leadership by people of low income, Black, Indigenous or People of Color, members of tribal communities, people with disabilities, youth, people from rural communities and people from otherwise disadvantaged communities in the siting, planning, designing or evaluating of the proposed community renewable energy projects.” An equity framework is one way an applicant can demonstrate it has developed a process for equitable engagement in their work; a framework could be developed for this project or generally, if it will be used for the project.

Below are links to examples of equity frameworks.

This first one is not specific to energy projects or a local government, but rather the state’s response to the COVID pandemic.

https://www.oregon.gov/pharmacy/Documents/EquityFrameworkCovid19_2020.pdf

The rest of the links are examples from local governments, but we want to be very clear that these were just found searching online and we do not have specific guidance or requirements for what an equity framework would look like for any single applicant.

[Marion County's Equity Workplan for Reducing Vaccine Inequities \(example of a project specific plan\)](#)

[Tigard's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Page](#)

[West Linn DEI Plan Status Tracker](#)

[Lane Community College Toolkit](#)

Question: Please confirm the Qualifying Communities criteria?

ODOE Response: Qualifying communities are environmental justice communities, which the legislature has defined as: *“Environmental justice communities” includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, tribal communities, rural communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities.*

Here is a link to Oregon Revised Statute 496A.400 [Definition of Environmental Justice Communities](#).

Here is a link to [House Bill 2021](#)

This link is to a list of resources that may help:

<https://www.oregon.gov/energy/Incentives/Documents/CREP-List-of-Resources.pdf>

Question: Does “community engagement” have to be with the general public? Our proposal involves a project that would not be open to the general public but will absolutely contribute to the resiliency of the general public. Stakeholders (local government, state agencies, NGOs) will be engaged but not necessarily the general public.

ODOE Response: Evidence is required that the application has been drafted in consultation with regional stakeholders and community groups. Planning grant applications have an additional requirement to describe consultation with qualifying communities, businesses, electric utilities, and other regional stakeholders and to describe how the consultation will be

incorporated into the planning. Please note that the applications will be competitively reviewed and there are opportunities for priority scoring which include involvement and engagement with qualifying communities.

Question: Would housing for seniors experiencing low income that is located in a qualifying community be classified as “structures or facilities that are essential to the public welfare”?

ODOE Response: Benefits to the public welfare will be evaluated on a competitive basis in the competitive review. We are leaving it up to applicants to demonstrate whether a structure or facility is essential to the public welfare. However, in general we would consider a structure or facility essential to the public welfare if it provides, or would provide in an emergency, services to support the well-being of the community. This could be, but is not limited to, utilities, hospitals, emergency responders, emergency shelters, communications, community shelters, as well as structures or facilities outlined in an emergency response plan.

Questions:

1. We are designing several projects with electric vehicle (EV) charging stations mounted on dual-axis trackers that will allow EV batteries to be used for storage once a program is established and approved by the utility and local codes. Will this count as a resilience project for this program?
2. Will a number (perhaps 4?) of stations integrated into the project make it qualify as a resilience project?
3. For projects with dedicated battery storage, is there a preferred battery size to solar system size ratio?

ODOE Response: Under this grant program, an electric vehicle (EV) is not considered a component of a renewable energy system and is not directly related to the installation of the renewable energy system, so would not be an eligible project cost. To be eligible as a resilience project the project must meet the definition of a [community energy resilience project](#) as well as meeting other required application criteria. The applicant will have the opportunity to demonstrate how the project would meet the definition of a community energy resilience project, for instance how a structure or facility is essential to the public welfare of the community. For projects with dedicated battery storage, there is no preferred battery size to solar system size ratio. The strength of the resilience aspects of the project will be assessed through the competitive review scoring. For projects with dedicated battery storage, there is no preferred battery size to solar system size ratio. The strength of the resilience aspects of the project will be assessed through the competitive review scoring.

Question: If the utility serves a rural community which meets the definition of "qualifying community" does that constitute an existing partnership with the qualifying community or would further engagement and outreach be required between the utility and community members.

ODOE Response: We are asking you to describe outreach to qualifying communities in a couple of different ways and depending on the opportunity announcement we will be asking for different information. For example, in the opportunity announcements for construction grants we are asking for consultation with community groups as part of developing the project and the description of outreach to qualifying communities regarding the project. We will be reviewing this as part of the competitive review scoring. If you have already done outreach to a community in relation to the project you can describe that outreach, it does not necessarily need to be new outreach.

Question: Does geographic diversity mean rural vs urban? Or is that category of the scoring criteria intended to limit the number of projects from an individual jurisdiction?

ODOE Response: The geographic diversity scoring in the competitive review is aimed at promoting spreading the benefits of the program around the state. However, there is not a limit on the number of projects from an individual jurisdiction and multiple projects in one area or by one applicant may still be offered grants.

Question: Is there a competitive scoring benefit for projects that are cost sharing? Or for projects that are requesting less than 100% of project costs?

ODOE Response: There is not necessarily a specific benefit to the factors mentioned, however, they may be considered when assessing the strength of the financial plan.

Question: Does a project have to have completed energy efficiency improvements prior to this project to qualify for the scoring criteria category or can they be happening concurrent with the proposed project?

ODOE Response: The scoring criteria will be assessing prior investments in energy efficiency.

Question: Will partial points be awarded in the scoring criteria categories? Or are the points for each category "all or nothing"?

ODOE Response: Yes, partial points are available, the points will be awarded on a scale.

Question: Are project proposals scored and ranked against other proposals within each opportunity category? Or are all the project proposals scored and ranked against each other across all opportunity categories?

ODOE Response: Project will be competitively scored against other projects in the same opportunity announcement. Before we offer any performance agreements, the Department will look across the four opportunity announcements to assess how the funding is being allocated which may impact the grants offered. At least half of the grant funds will be awarded for projects that serve environmental justice communities, including communities of color, lower-income communities, rural communities, and others. Similarly, at least half of the grant funds will be awarded to projects that support community energy resilience.

Question: If a community has a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) that has expired and is not currently FEMA approved would they be eligible to receive the points under that scoring criteria?

ODOE Response: If the project assists an applicant achieving goals set out in their natural hazard mitigation plan as approved by FEMA it would receive points. An expired approval may still meet this requirement though it may not receive all five of the points in the category. This will be evaluated within the overall competitive review process. Non-FEMA approved plans would not receive points under the criteria. However, if it was a resilience project, they may receive points under the strength of the community resilience aspects of the project criteria.

Funding

Question: Are there any type of matching fund sources not permitted?

ODOE Response: Matching funds should be legal and permitted under the applicant's governing rules and regulations. For construction of a community renewable energy project that does not qualify as a community energy resilience project, a grant may cover up to 50 percent of the project cost not to exceed \$1 million. The project cost is the actual cost of the acquisition, construction and installation of a renewable energy system incurred by an applicant, before considering utility incentives. The department shall reduce the grant amount, if the grant combined with other incentives and grants received by the applicant exceeds 100 percent of the project costs. A list of [eligible and ineligible costs](#) are outlined in the program administrative rules. The final distribution amount may be reduced based on the CPA verification letter required in the final report.

Question: Are there competitive procurement requirements for costs to be paid for by grant funding? We've found a consultant to help us with our application, but I want to make sure we will be in the clear to submit these consulting costs without issuing a formal solicitation for bids.

ODOE Response: We do not have any specific requirements relating to competitive procurement of a consultant's services. An eligible applicant should follow its governing procurement regulations and comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. Eligible and ineligible costs are listed in the program rules.

Question: In the guidelines, it states that the incentives must not exceed the project costs: "If the combined amounts would exceed 100 percent of the total costs, any community renewable energy grant would be reduced so that the total incentives/grants would not exceed 100 percent of the planning or project costs."

I assume that the "project costs" is only related to the upfront project construction costs and the grant is not to exceed that overall amount. If there is any further definition that I am missing, could you please clarify?

ODOE Response: The project cost means the actual cost of the acquisition, construction and installation of a renewable energy system incurred by an applicant, before considering utility incentives. ODOE will reduce grant amounts, if the grant combined with other incentives and grants received by the applicant exceeds 100 percent of the project costs. Please refer to both, the specific opportunity announcement your application is related to, and this link to the [Oregon Administration Rules](#) for the complete rules concerning costs, and application and performance agreement requirements for each type of grant under the four opportunity announcements.

Question: Is there an example of a performance agreement for the planning and development grants?

ODOE Response: We do not currently have a performance agreement available, however, we continue to explore what resources we can provide applicants to better inform their decisions. Performance agreement requirements are outlined in the [Oregon Administrative Rules](#).

Question: Is there a standard for what is included in the CPA Verification Letter that is referenced in the opportunity announcement?

ODOE Response: Details will be specified in the performance agreement, and will generally need to state that a CPA has reviewed documents provided by the applicant, what amount those documents show the costs to be, and that it is correct.

Question: Does the customer need to wait to execute the performance agreement before beginning work on their project?

ODOE Response: The applicant must apply for a grant before starting installation or construction of the renewable energy system in the application, and installation or construction of the project must begin within 12 months after the date that the performance agreement is signed by all parties. Eligible costs are those incurred after the application deadline.

Question: After application review and award, what is ODOE's timeline to release award money after a performance agreement is signed?

ODOE Response: After a grant is awarded, an applicant will have thirty days to accept the performance agreement. For planning grants, ODOE may release up to 30 percent of the grant moneys upon entering into a performance agreement with an applicant, to be spent on eligible planning costs. The remaining grant moneys would be available upon completion of the planning project. For construction grants, ODOE may release up to 30 percent of the grant moneys upon entering into a performance agreement with an applicant, if the applicant demonstrates having:

- Taken meaningful steps to seek site control, including but not limited to an option to lease or purchase the site or an executed letter of intent or exclusivity agreement to negotiate an option to lease or purchase the site.
- Filed a request for interconnection with a host utility or appropriate transmission provider.
- Met any other requirements provided by the department in the performance agreement.

The remaining grant moneys would be released upon project completion under the terms of the performance agreement.

Question: Would the inclusion of a diesel generator as part of a resiliency project exclude an application from funding? The generator would be connected to the overall system of solar panels, batteries, and EV chargers, which would be what we seek reimbursement for.

ODOE Response: The diesel generator would not exclude a project from being eligible, however, costs associated with the diesel generator would be ineligible.

Question: Can the construction grant go toward meeting the 1.5% green energy technology requirement for public bodies that construct new buildings (ORS 279C.527-528)?

ODOE Response: Yes, the construction grant may be used in relation to the 1.5% green energy technology requirement for public bodies constructing new buildings.

Question: Can the costs associated with including a fossil fuel generator (either the controls and integration of an existing generator at the site or the costs associated with a new generator) be included in a solar-plus-storage resilience-based system for both the planning and construction grants.

ODOE Response: Only those costs associated with planning, construction, installation and interconnection of the proposed renewable energy system are eligible for the program. Costs associated with the fossil fuel generator would not be eligible.

Question: It is common for a solar plus storage microgrid to incorporate a diesel or propane generator. In fact, combining solar, battery storage, and a thermal generator with appropriate microgrid controls can allow the generator to operate more efficiently minimizing the use of fossil fuels and essentially extending the capacity of the diesel/propane fuel tank. Are the costs associated with a thermal generator combined with a renewable energy microgrid eligible for grant funds?

ODOE Response: Costs associated with a diesel or propane generator would not be eligible. The project would be eligible, with the costs associated with solar, battery storage (paired with solar), and microgrid enabling technologies paired with solar all eligible costs.

Question: If a new roof, structural upgrades, and/or electrical upgrades are required in order for a community resilience center to be able to support a solar plus battery storage system. Would those roof replacement, structural upgrades, and electrical upgrades be eligible costs?

ODOE Response: Costs that are incurred to bring a host building up to building code standards or otherwise repair the building in order to install the system, including design or engineering expenses would not be eligible. Structural and electrical upgrades necessary for the installation may be considered eligible costs, but a roof replacement would not be eligible. Materials and supplies required for the construction, installation, and interconnection of the proposed renewable energy system would be eligible. The competitive review may favor projects where the costs distribution is weighted towards the renewable energy systems.

Question: The legislature allocated \$50 million to the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program. This round of funding is for \$12 million total, or a bit less than 1/4 of the \$50 million total, split between the four different funding announcements (or project types). Correct? Does that mean that there will be a similar grant opportunity in 2023, 2024 and 2025 until the full \$50 million in funds are spent?

ODOE Response: Yes, the legislature allocated \$50 million to Community Renewable Energy Grant Program with \$26,960,291 being allocated for the current biennium (2021-2023) and the

remaining funds in the following biennium. The \$12 million in the first opportunity announcement is for all four opportunity announcements. There will be future rounds of opportunity announcements after the close of this first round on July 8, 2022, and the funding allocation for each round will be announced in the opportunity announcements.

There will be an opportunity to apply later this year for additional funds. We will continue to offer opportunity announcements until the funds are allocated or the program ends.

Question: Can the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program funding can be mixed with other federal sources of funding?

ODOE Response: The Community Renewable Energy Grant Program funds can be used in conjunction with federal funding, however, the total amount of grant funds combined cannot exceed 100 percent of the planning or project costs. If the combined amounts would exceed 100 percent of the total costs, any community renewable energy grant would be reduced so that the total incentives/grants would not exceed 100 percent of the planning or project costs.

Question: The legislation placed a requirement on the \$50M grant fund that “A minimum of 50 percent of these funds are reserved for projects that qualify as a community energy resilience project, and a minimum of 50 percent is reserved for community renewable energy projects that primarily serve a qualifying community.” The OA appears to state that ODOE will be applying that 50% requirement to the \$12M that is available for this grant round. Am I reading that right? Will that be applied as a carveout meaning no more than \$6M will be spent on renewable energy projects that do not incorporate resilience and/or serve a qualifying community?

ODOE Response: A minimum of 50 percent of the total grant funds must be reserved for projects that qualify as a community energy resilience project, and a minimum of 50 percent for community renewable energy projects that primarily serve a qualifying community. In order to try and keep on track for that target we aim to maintain this split during this first opportunity announcement.

Question: If the combined costs of a new solar array plus connected energy storage for community resiliency are under \$1,000,000, can the grant program fund 100% of the costs? Or would the new solar array component require 50% match, and the connected energy storage component require 0% match? I’m trying to figure out how connected these different project categories can be.

ODOE Response: The percentage of costs covered by the program depend on the project as a whole. If the project met the eligibility requirements for being a community energy resilience project (a community renewable energy project that includes utilizing one or more renewable energy systems to support the energy resilience of structures or facilities that are essential to the public welfare) then the grant could cover up to 100% of the eligible project costs, up to \$1M. If the project does not meet the eligibility requirements for a community energy resilience project but does meet the requirements for a community renewable energy project (one or more renewable energy systems, storage systems, microgrids or energy-related infrastructure that promote energy resilience, increase renewable energy generation or renewable energy storage capacity and provide a direct benefit to a particular community in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development or direct energy costs savings to families and small businesses) then the grant could cover up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to \$1M.

Question: Will the planning grant funds be moved forward on a faster timeline than development grant funds?

ODOE Response: The review timeline is the same across all opportunity announcements in this first round. The timeline for future opportunity announcements and future review rounds has not been set at this time.

Project Eligibility

Question: Our project will include EV charging with bidirectional charging capability. In addition to the EV charging technology, could the construction project funds also cover the cost of an EV service vehicle i.e. a Ford F150 Lightning pick-up which could act as both an energy storage device and rechargeable emergency transportation vehicle?

ODOE Response: Under this grant program, an electric vehicle (EV) is not considered a component of a renewable energy system and is not directly related to the installation of the renewable energy system, so would not be an eligible project cost. The inclusion of the EV in the application as part of the energy resilience benefits to the community could strengthen the application for the competitive review.

Question: Please clarify if Oregon Community Solar projects will be treated same as other applications. Is there any issue with the grant funds going toward Community Solar projects?

ODOE Response:

ODOE staff, in collaboration with the Public Utility Commission staff, have assessed the rate structure of a community solar project and do not believe it qualifies as a utility incentive. Any grant awarded through the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program to an applicant that is, or is partnered with, a community solar project would not be reduced based upon the rate structure of the community solar project.

Questions: We are a small rural community school district made up of two separated campuses. Would our school district be considered one grant opportunity, or could we plan and apply for both sites as separate projects? If they are separate grant opportunities per site, what is the likelihood of being awarded at both sites?

ODOE Response: Because this is a new program with a competitive review of the applications, we cannot predict the likeliness of selection of any application. We advise you to become very familiar with all the program documentation posted on our website to assist you in creating the strongest, most competitive application by addressing as many aspects of the competitive scoring criteria as possible.

Regarding your two campuses, you may submit applications in the manner that best fits your school district's ability to plan and execute projects to the required timelines. You may plan for separate projects and submit separate applications. Generally, a project would need to fit into one of two definitions, either as a community renewable energy project or as a community energy resilience project.

A community renewable energy project means one or more renewable energy systems, storage systems, microgrids or energy-related infrastructure that promote energy resilience, increase renewable energy generation or renewable energy storage capacity and provide a direct benefit to a particular community in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development or direct energy costs savings to families and small businesses.

A community energy resilience project is a community renewable energy project that includes utilizing one or more renewable energy systems to support the energy resilience of structures or facilities that are essential to the public welfare.

Question: I am building for commercialization of an ocean Wave Energy Converter, would I fit this program?

ODOE Response: Eligible applicants to the program are federally recognized Oregon Indian tribes, public bodies, or consumer-owned utilities. Applicants are able to partner with eligible entities, including private businesses with a business site in Oregon. Wave energy is included on the list of eligible technologies for the program.

Question: By offsetting the energy use and greenhouse gas emissions of a building that houses public services, would this project qualify for Community Renewable Energy Program funding? In addition to housing public services, this location will be highly visible to the community and will be a part of our sustainability tours at city facilities.

ODOE Response: From the brief overview you provided it sounds like the project would be eligible for the program. To be eligible for the program the project would need meet the definition of a Community Renewable Energy Project, which is one or more renewable energy systems, storage systems, microgrids or energy-related infrastructure that promote energy resilience, increase renewable energy generation or renewable energy storage capacity and provide a direct benefit to a particular community in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development or direct energy costs savings to families and small businesses. Additionally, the project would need to meet all other eligibility requirements listed in the opportunity announcement.

Question: We are considering a renewable natural gas (RNG) project, but the RNG would be used for vehicles, space heating or industrial processes and not to generate electricity. Please indicate whether RNG projects of this type would qualify.

ODOE Response: The project would need to fit into one of two definitions, either as [a community renewable energy project](#) or as [a community energy resilience project](#). The project described is more likely to be a community renewable energy project. Eligible renewable energy technologies for the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program include biogas systems. The system could be for producing electrical or thermal energy.

Question: Could a city apply for a grant for a solar farm to be potentially located on an airport? Would there be any restrictions to awarding a grant per HB 2021 for a solar farm location at an airport?

ODOE Response: A city would be an eligible applicant for the program. It sounds as if you are interested in the planning grants offered by the program. If that is the case, eligible costs include, but are not limited to, costs associated with consulting fees; load analysis; siting, excluding property acquisition; ensuring code compliance; interconnection studies; transmission studies; and other analysis and studies necessary for planning a renewable energy system. The project would need to meet the definition of either [a community renewable energy project](#) or [a community energy resilience project](#), as well as other eligibility requirements listed in the opportunity announcement. The planning project would also need to result in a proposal for developing a community renewable energy project.

Question: Our city has an aggressive climate action plan and we are looking to electrify buildings and add solar where possible. A stakeholder suggested we replace our city hall natural gas backup generator by applying for a Grant for Renewable Energy and Energy Resilience Projects to install a solar array with battery backup. Can you please give me an idea if this is the type of project the CREP grant was designed for? The criteria: “priority will be given to projects that support energy resilience and that serve certain qualifying communities, including communities of color, low-income communities, Tribes, rural areas, and other traditionally underserved groups.” Suggests to me more direct benefit by an underserved group like a tribal community center. The city is looking for grant opportunities to install solar. Would the Public Safety Building which houses a Fire Station, Police Station and EOC center be a better candidate?

ODOE Response: Yes, the city would be eligible to apply to the program for a project that includes solar with battery backup. The project would need to fit into one of two definitions, either as [a community renewable energy project](#) or as [a community energy resilience project](#).

The projects will be competitively reviewed and there is a list of scoring criteria in each of the opportunity announcements. Serving a qualifying community is not a requirement, but there are scoring criteria linked to how a project serves and involves qualifying communities. A minimum of 50 percent of the program’s total grant funds are required to be directed towards projects that primarily serve qualifying communities.

Another scoring criterion is the strength of the community energy resilience aspects of the project, which you may wish to think about when considering what project(s) you wish to apply to the program for.

Question: We are proposing a project where we will install new solar panels and connect existing solar systems to new vehicle charging stations at a community college. Would that be considered a Community Energy Resilience Project?

ODOE Response: To be eligible as a resilience project the project must meet the definition of [a community energy resilience project](#) as well as meeting other required application criteria. We invite you to look at our [website](#) that discusses the grant. On the right-hand side of the page are four opportunity announcements that may help answer your questions.

Question: Can electrical upgrade projects, such as secondary voltage conversion, be submitted for planning grant opportunities? The project purpose is to provide capacity and scalability of incremental redevelopment project requests as they are made (solar panels, EV charging stations, etc.).

ODOE Response: As described, your project does not seem eligible. A planning grant must be in relation to a specific project. Eligible projects must meet the definitions of [a community renewable energy project](#) or [a community energy resilience project](#). Eligible planning grant costs include, but are not limited to, costs associated with:

- (1) Consulting fees;
 - (2) Load analysis;
 - (3) Siting, excluding property acquisition;
 - (4) Ensuring code compliance;
 - (5) Interconnection studies;
 - (6) Transmission studies; and
 - (7) Other analysis and studies necessary for planning a renewable energy system.
-

Question: We are a nonprofit that has worked with a county to start up a CPACE program. (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) This outstanding programs enables building owners to access financing for clean energy, efficiency and water conservation. the financing requires no cash down and these projects usually immediately create cash flow. Utility savings can be passed on to tenants. The issue is that we may be able to administer this program, but we don't have funds to do it. (We'd need to ensure that owners meet statutory requirements.) We could educate our community and get more projects onboard. Does ODOE have any financing to help with this? Not for the projects themselves, as they will be paid for, but the administration that enables the projects to be done? We need about \$75,000 yearly.

ODOE Response: Administrative costs for the CPACE program would not be eligible for the Community Renewable Energy Program. ODOE does not currently have any funding for the administrative costs for the CPACE program. If you want to stay up to date on future opportunities or ODOE's work you can sign up for newsletters or email updates on the [ODOE website](#). You may also be interested in the recently released [White House Rural Playbook](#). This has listings of the infrastructure programs targeting rural communities.

Question: Would an RNG project (say for fleet conversion) qualify for the CREP grant?

ODOE Response: Biogas is an eligible technology. The project would have to meet all the other program requirements including meeting the definition of a [community renewable energy project](#) or [community energy resilience project](#).

Question: After reading more about the grant I don't think our agency will qualify. Are there any grants available for the installation of EV charging stations that don't correspond with any other energy requirements?

ODOE Response: You may wish to talk with your local utility who may have funding mechanisms related to EV charging stations. Also, DEQ is offering Clean Fuels Program support for transportation electrification. If the project is focused on putting in charging infrastructure, you may be eligible for CFP credits and potentially advanced crediting (i.e. loans) to support the up-front costs. Additionally, you may wish to keep up to date on ODOT's work on transportation infrastructure.

Question: We are currently in the process of applying for PGE's Renewable Development Fund for a public safety building but want to look at the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program funding in case that falls through. We're hoping this would fall under a community renewable energy system requirement given that it increases energy resilience of a public building with high public visibility. The project will be included in our sustainability tours open to the public, and our contractor has expressed willingness to include a training element to a CBO dedicated to building solar/renewable energy skills/expertise in the BIPOC community.

ODOE Response: This project sounds like it would be eligible for the program as a community renewable energy project. Depending on the details of the energy resilience part of the project, it may be eligible as a community energy resilience project.

Question: Our planning department is interested in Community Renewable Energy Grant funding for a planning project, but it would be more about reviewing development plans to make a high standard of energy efficiency (possibly Reach code level) a requirement for developers and providing them an incentive to offset the higher cost of higher efficiency construction. As I understand the admin rules of the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program, planning would have to be for a very specific community renewable energy project or community energy resilience project rather than a plan for increasing the efficiency of the buildings in the community. Would this be something that could be tied in should planning include planning for community solar and other renewable energy and resiliency systems that benefit the community as a whole?

ODOE Response: You are correct, planning would have to be for planning a specific community renewable energy project and would need to result in a proposal for developing a community renewable energy project. Eligible costs would only be those associated with analysis and studies necessary for planning a renewable energy system.

Question: We have been apprised of utilities that have converted either pressure loss in water infrastructure or filling of hydro storage as a mechanism to utilize that energy loss to generate electricity. I am curious as to if hydro in this aspect could qualify.

ODOE Response: Yes, these hydro projects could be eligible.

Question: Is a project that generates renewable thermal energy only (no electricity) eligible - in this case from biomass?

ODOE Response: Yes, a renewable energy system that produces thermal energy could be eligible for the program.

Question: In 2013 our community college and the Oregon Military Dept (OMD) opened a readiness center intended to be part of a critical regional recovery facility in the event of wildfires and other natural disasters. This facility was designed to be net-zero but never achieved that status. Solar cells on the roof are not operating at full capacity, and additional solar capacity is needed beyond the existing roof system. In addition, a ground-source heating system is not operating at full capacity. These issues result in higher utility bills to the college and OMD and defeats the original design intent of net-zero. Resolving these issues will require a combination of repairs to existing systems, possible upgrades to those systems, and installation of additional solar capacity.

The readiness center is owned by the Oregon Military Department. The college owns the underlying property, which is leased to OMD on a long-term basis. The college and OMD have shared use of the building. The college's Electro-Mechanical Technology program is housed on the ground floor. This program incorporates renewable energy training, including solar, geothermal, and hydro. Would this project qualify for funding through Grant Opportunity 22-003 since it involves repairs and upgrades to existing systems as well as new installation?

ODOE Response: The cost of the repairs to the existing system would not be eligible, but new installation costs would be eligible. To qualify under opportunity announcement 22-003, the project would have to meet the definition of a community energy resilience project.

“Community energy resilience project” means a community renewable energy project that includes utilizing one or more renewable energy systems to support the energy resilience of structures or facilities that are essential to the public welfare.

Eligible costs include:

- The cost of components of the proposed renewable energy system;
 - Materials and supplies required for the construction, installation, and interconnection of the proposed renewable energy system.
 - The cost of title searches, escrow fees, permits fees, license fees and shipping.
 - Design or engineering expenses related to renewable energy system components.
 - Environmental studies, including source testing.
-

Question: Will "eligible projects" include new construction net zero energy affordable housing projects serving only the tenants, or will such projects also have to do more to create a community wide benefit?

ODOE Response: The project needs to fit into one of two buckets, a community energy resilience project, or a community renewable energy project. A brief overview is provided here:

- A community energy resilience project would need to use a renewable energy system to support energy resilience of a structure or facility essential to the public welfare.
- A community renewable energy project would need to use a renewable energy system to increase renewable energy generation or storage capacity and provide a direct benefit to a particular community in the form of increased local jobs, economic development, or direct energy cost savings to families and small businesses.

There are also several other requirements including requirements outlined in the opportunity announcements. There is not a requirement regarding the size of the community that benefits, other than the project being in, and benefitting, a community in Oregon but not in a city with a population of 500,000 or more. The scale of the benefits will be assessed alongside other factors during the competitive review process.

Questions: The grant states that eligible technologies include vehicle charging stations paired with a new or existing renewable energy generation system. We have two locations at which the buildings have solar panels mounted on the roof that do not belong to us. These solar panels were installed by a third party to help us meet renewable energy goals for the building but none of the power is used on site. Would these locations be considered eligible for the grant if charging stations were installed at these buildings but none of the energy generated actually powered the station itself?

What about charging stations in other places on a site which has solar generation, but it would not be co-located with the stations themselves?

Other charging station related grants have included operating costs for up to 3 years which cover subscription rates to make the stations discoverable to a network like plug share. Are these costs considered for this grant?

ODOE Response: The existing renewable energy system must be paired with the new electric vehicle charging stations to be eligible. Electric vehicle charging stations not connected to the renewable energy system would not be eligible for the program. Costs associated with maintaining, operating, or repairing the electric vehicle charging station would not be eligible.

Question: I can see where placing EV charging stations at a building with solar panels on the roof would be considered paired. Do you also mean paired from an infrastructure perspective where the EV stations are feeding from the solar panels? If so, would the installation of new solar panels in locations for new charging station be fundable from the grant?

ODOE Response: The EV charging stations and solar panels could be located behind the same electric service meter to qualify as paired. Depending on the project and the grant being applied for there may be other requirements. New solar panels paired with the charging station would be eligible for the grant along with the EV charging stations.

Questions: First, we have a solar array on the building and there is a possibility of a new building going up this summer. I would like to add car chargers at both locations, both the current building and the potential new building. Would it be possible for this grant to cover both locations for a renewable energy charging station? Second, we are building a new site roughly 25 miles away from here in an underserved area. Would this location be a viable spot to be considered or would the lack of solar on the roof make the opportunity for a car charger void?

ODOE Response: To be eligible for the grants electric vehicle charging stations must be paired with either an existing or newly constructed renewable energy generation system. You can apply for both locations if the charging stations are paired with a renewable energy generation system. As for the new location, without being paired with a renewable energy generation system the charging stations would not be eligible for the grant.

Questions: We provide power from BPA, which is 84% hydroelectric with some solar and wind. Does that count toward the renewable generation requirement for adding battery storage to an existing substation?

- If not, how much new renewable generation do we need to add?
- Must the manufacturers of batteries, inverters, and controls be selected in advance of the application?
- If manufacturers have not yet been selected, can equivalent or representative equipment information be provided – with the knowledge that the selected manufacturers may change after bid evaluations?

ODOE Response: No, the energy from BPA would not count as the renewable energy generation system, the renewable energy system would need to be onsite. We haven't established any minimum ratios for renewable energy to battery storage. Projects will be competitively reviewed, projects that have ratios of renewables to storage that support resilience will score higher. For planning grants, we do not require the selection of batteries, inverters, and controls. For construction grants, we ask for technical specifications and manufacturer's warranties, though we are aware availability may change and the equipment may be amended during the project if the project would operate essentially as originally proposed.

Question: We are the architect for a library system as they add two new library buildings and renovate their others. The new construction buildings are both planned to be net zero energy with their own on-site photovoltaic arrays. As a community resource and building that would likely be used to support the community following a disaster, we believe these buildings meet the intent of your program. Could you please confirm that we would be eligible to apply for the grant for photovoltaics on the libraries?

ODOE Response: Photovoltaic arrays on a library roof are an eligible renewable energy technology in the program. To qualify as an energy resilience project the photovoltaics should be paired with a battery storage system to enable operation when the grid is down. A more complete list of eligible equipment is available in the opportunity announcements.

Project eligibility is also determined by the applicant. Eligible applicants to the program are Oregon Tribes, public bodies, and consumer-owned utilities. Public bodies include state government bodies, local government bodies and special government bodies. A library district is considered a local government body and would be eligible to apply. There are planning and construction grants available, for both projects that qualify as community energy resilience projects and those that do not.

Questions: Our City will break ground on a new Civic Center that includes the Police Department (PD) and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) next month. In the plans is an 80 kW solar array.

Would the PD and EOC be defined as a structure or facility that are essential to the public welfare? Is there a minimum size of renewable energy generation for a grant request? Is a project that will only power the building it is attached to qualify? Or since the building would provide support in the case of an emergency it would be eligible under the increased community energy resilience criteria?

ODOE Response: In the application you would be able to demonstrate how the project would meet certain criteria, for instance whether a structure is essential to the public welfare of the community. In the case of a Police Department and Emergency Operations Center, we would consider them essential to the public welfare.

There is no minimum size of renewable energy generation, just a maximum limit of 20MW. To be eligible for an energy resilience grant you would need to demonstrate how the community renewable energy project would support the energy resilience of the police department and emergency operations center. All projects will be competitively scored against other projects in the same grant opportunity.

A project that will only power the building it is attached to would qualify, though you may wish to consider which construction grant best fits the proposed project. In the application you will be asked to describe a direct benefit to a community in the form of increased community

energy resilience, local jobs (this could be created during construction or sustained during operations), economic development or direct energy costs savings to families and small businesses.

Question: Which funding category (22-001, 22-002, 22-003, 22-004) would make sense for 2 potential projects?

- develop a community energy strategic plan for a federally recognized tribe
- cost/feasibility analysis and installation of transmission line extension to enable interconnection of a future community scale solar project. Applicant would be a federally recognized tribe in partnership with a tribal organization supporting economic development and traditional food systems on trust land located in, but not yet served by, an electric coop.

ODOE Response: Planning grants must be associated with an eligible renewable energy project. A community energy strategic plan that is not associated with a proposed renewable energy facility would not be eligible. The planning grant funds aim to support planning a specific renewable energy project which would lead to a proposal for developing a community renewable energy project.

Eligible community renewable energy projects must utilize one or more renewable energy system technologies. New energy storage, microgrid technologies, or electric vehicle charging stations must be paired with an existing or newly constructed renewable energy system for producing energy. For more information on eligible projects please see the opportunity announcements on the [ODOE webpage](#).

Question: Would an energy audit qualify for the grant?

ODOE Response: An Energy Audit would not qualify, however, evidence of the audit and energy efficiency measures taken at a project location could score points in the competitive review for an eligible application. Eligible costs for ODOE's Community Renewable Energy Grant Program are those that are either necessary for planning, or associated with the construction of, a renewable energy system.

Question: Does Solar Thermal also qualify for this grant?

ODOE Response: Yes, solar thermal is an eligible renewable energy system technology for the program.

Question: We are installing 100 DCFC sites in Oregon with a total of 1500 Ports for LDV and HDV we have planned this over the last two years. Will the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program help to cover any of the cost of construction?

ODOE Response: Construction costs associated with the installation of an electric vehicle charging station are eligible costs for grant funding only if the charging station is paired with an existing or newly constructed renewable energy system.

Question: Would installing/purchasing solar and grid tied electric vehicle charging stations be something that would be eligible for the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program?

ODOE Response: Yes, costs associated with the planning, acquisition, construction, and installation of electric vehicle charging stations paired with solar systems would be eligible. Electric vehicle charging stations not paired with existing or new renewable energy generation systems would not be eligible.

Question: Would retrofits of city locations (buildings, pump sites) with renewable energy equipment and power storage for the ability to self-power on a full time or emergency/resiliency basis be something that would be eligible for the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program?

ODOE Response: Yes, this this would be eligible as long as the energy storage system is paired with an existing or newly constructed renewable energy generation system.

Question: Our city wants to facilitate a community/city owned renewable energy storage location. Would be eligible for the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program?

ODOE Response: Yes, if the storage is paired with an existing or newly constructed renewable energy generation system and it meets one of these two project descriptions.

- “Community renewable energy project” means one or more renewable energy systems, storage systems, microgrids or energy-related infrastructure that promote energy resilience, increase renewable energy generation or renewable energy storage capacity, and provide a direct benefit to a particular community in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development or direct energy costs savings to families and small businesses.
- “Community energy resilience project” means a community renewable energy project that includes utilizing one or more renewable energy systems to support the energy resilience of structures or facilities that are essential to the public welfare.

Question: Is there any limitation on the type of project that can be proposed? For instance, would a group of solar plus storage systems installed on individual residential homes submitted by an eligible applicant for a qualifying community as a single development project be eligible?

ODOE Response: The project would be eligible if it meets the definition of either a community renewable energy project or community energy resilience project, as well as other project requirements such as:

- The project must be located in, and benefit, a community in Oregon and not be located in a city with a population of 500,000 or more.
- The project must not exceed 20 MW of nameplate capacity if the project is for generating renewable energy.

In the example provided, the project could be eligible as a single development if it is an eligible applicant, there is a specific market for the energy, the nameplate capacity of all the renewable energy systems is below 20MW, it is not in a city with a population of 500,000 or more, and the project provides a direct benefit to a community. Energy resilience projects must support the energy resilience of structures or facilities essential to the public welfare. In this example, the energy resilience benefits of the proposed project may not extend beyond the individual dwellings. The proposed project should consider applying to the Oregon Solar Plus Storage Rebate program which is specifically targeted to residential projects.

Question: Are interconnection and permitting fees included in eligible project costs?

ODOE Response: Eligible planning costs include costs associated with ensuring code compliance and interconnection studies. Eligible construction costs include materials and supplies required for the construction, installation, and interconnection of the proposed renewable energy system and the cost of title searches, escrow fees, permits fees, license fees and shipping. The program rules do not limit the amount of interconnection costs. Projects with very high interconnection costs compared to the project cost may not compete as well.

Question: How far along does a project need to be to pursue a development grant? Is the intent that a project be "shovel ready" - which could mean that it has already gone through a detailed design and has permits in hand? Or is the intent only that a project be capable of achieving the timeline described "beginning construction within 12 months of execution of the performance agreement and ... completed within 36 months" - which could mean that a small to medium sized solar plus storage project would be able to meet those timelines with a preliminary design and cost estimate.

ODOE Response: The project just needs to be able to achieve the timeline described in the opportunity announcement. Eligible costs for the construction grants include the cost of title

searches, escrow fees, permits fees, license fees, and shipping, as well as design or engineering expenses related to renewable energy system components. The strength of the project description and construction plan are factors that will be considered in the competitive review.

Question: Are there any additional requirements for development projects on sites that could be considered historic similar to the FEMA Environmental Planning & Historic Preservation requirements?

ODOE Response: Not relating to this grant, however, we do require a statement of compliance with applicable state and local regulations and that the applicant will notify the appropriate agencies and obtain required licenses and permits.

Applicant/Partner Eligibility

Question: Is there a difference between a "partner" versus an organization just providing a letter of support?

ODOE Response: Yes. Partner is referring to specific project partners and only specific entities may be a partner on a project, please follow the link to the definition in the [rules](#). Please also review the opportunity announcement sections *1.4 Eligibility*, and *2.1 Submission of Applications*. An organization just providing a letter of support (who is not a partner) likely falls into the regional stakeholder category. Stakeholder is referring to related utilities, community groups and anyone else involved with ensuring feasibility and/or as part of community engagement under opportunity announcement section 2.1. Community partnerships and outreach are components in the scoring criteria and can help strengthen an application in the competitive review.

Planning grant applications also request a description of how consultation with the following groups will be incorporated into the planning:

- Members of qualifying communities served by the proposed community renewable energy project.
- Businesses located in the communities served by the proposed community renewable energy project.
- Electric utilities that have customers in the communities served by the proposed community renewable energy project.
- Other regional stakeholders.

Question: Do partners have additional commitments in carrying out the project?

ODOE Response: The performance agreement will be between the Oregon Department of Energy and the successful eligible applicant. Commitments of partners will be unique to each project and may depend upon the relationship between the applicant and the partner.

Question: Should local utility providers be listed as partners?

ODOE Response: Only if they are a partner as discussed in the first answer above. It is required to provide evidence that the application has been drafted in consultation with electric utilities that have customers in the communities covered by the community renewable energy project, for the purpose of ensuring feasibility. This may include a letter from the electric utility serving the communities covered by a community renewable energy project or other evidence that the applicant has consulted the electric utility.

Question: What is the specific difference between a Partner (section 3) and a Stakeholder (section 5) for a resilience planning grant?

ODOE Response: Partner is referring to any specific project partners. Here is a link to the definition in the rules. Please also review the opportunity announcement sections 1.4 Eligibility, and 2.1 Submission of Applications.

Stakeholder is referring to related utilities, community groups and anyone else involved with ensuring feasibility and/or as part of community engagement under opportunity announcement section 2.1.

Planning grant applications also request a description of how consultation with the following groups will be incorporated into the planning:

- Members of qualifying communities served by the proposed community renewable energy project;
- Businesses located in the communities served by the proposed community renewable energy project;
- Electric utilities that have customers in the communities served by the proposed community renewable energy project; and
- Other regional stakeholders.

Please also review section 3.3 Competitive Review, for the criteria of scoring the competitive review, which includes criteria related to project leadership, community partnerships, and community outreach.

Question: Are there any lists of host site owners / eligible prime applicants who have expressed an interest in partnering with project developers, engineering firms, installers, technology/solution providers, O&M providers, financiers (for projects that required more capital), etc.

Alternatively, a Slack Chanel or other similar networking portal could also facilitate teaming discussions amount potential partners.

ODOE Response: We do not have a list of host site owners/eligible prime applicants or a networking portal at this time.

Question: We are a private, non-profit boarding school, does our school qualify for this grant program?

ODOE Response: Eligible applicants to the program are federally recognized Oregon Indian tribes, public bodies or consumer-owned utilities. A private school would not be eligible to apply, though nonprofits and private businesses with a business site in Oregon are eligible to partner with an applicant on a grant application. If you would like to learn more about the program, please visit the [program website](#).

Question: What would a partnership between a city and a nonprofit organization need to look like or how it would need to be represented in the application to qualify for a solar project on a community service building? In submitting an application for a partnership between a city and a nonprofit, would the city be submitting on behalf of nonprofit? Would the city be able to apply for a separate project on a Public Safety Building?

ODOE Response: The city would need to be the applicant, if awarded a grant the performance agreement would be between ODOE and the city, and the grant would be paid to the city. The city would need to list the project partners in the application and submit any required information. The city could apply for multiple projects.

Question: Would a public university qualify as eligible?

ODOE Response: Yes, public universities are eligible applicants to the Community Renewable Energy Program. Below is a list of the public universities listed in ORS 352.002 that would be eligible for the program.

- University of Oregon.
 - Oregon State University.
 - Portland State University.
 - Oregon Institute of Technology.
 - Western Oregon University.
 - Southern Oregon University.
 - Eastern Oregon University.
-

Question: Is Portland State University ineligible as a result of the population criteria that impacts the City of Portland?

ODOE Response: Portland State University is an eligible applicant, but the project would need to be located outside the City of Portland.

Question: Please confirm if Public Community Colleges in Oregon are considered eligible entities to submit applications for the 2022 Community Renewable Energy Grant Program. Your website indicates that public bodies include counties, municipalities, and special government bodies such as ports and irrigation districts. Please, if you can confirm if Lane Community College would be considered an eligible public body for this program.

ODOE Response: Yes, a community college in Oregon would be an eligible public body for the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program.

Question: A community wanted to install a resilience project on a nonprofit facility. What requirements would be placed on the eligible applicant/public body if they are 'passing through' the grant funds for a project that would be owned and operated by the nonprofit?

ODOE Response: ODOE will only release grant funds to the eligible applicant associated with a project. The applicant may then distribute those funds according to their own procurement and accounting practices. There are no special requirements placed on applicants passing through funds. The applicant would first have to demonstrate the project is an eligible project. One of the requirements for resilience projects is that the renewable energy system supports the energy resilience of a structure or facility essential to the public welfare. The applicant may demonstrate how the structure or facility is essential to the public welfare in the application. Other factors to consider would be the strength of the project operations plan, which will be reviewed in the competitive review.

Questions:

1. Can a public body be the applicant and partner with a nonprofit or private business, with the intention of re-granting the funding to the nonprofit or private business for use in a renewable energy project? I.e., can the applicant re-grant the funding for a project not on the applicant's property?
2. Would a project that would install a renewable energy system for a private business that is a major employer in the community be eligible?
3. Would a project that would install a renewable energy system for a private business that is a major public destination (but not a critical facility) be eligible?
4. Would a project that would install a renewable energy microgrid for a non-profit private business that runs a critical facility in the community be eligible?

ODOE Response: In response to all four questions above, concerning the applicant and partners: A performance agreement for the program is between the Oregon Department of Energy and the applicant. The applicant will be able to distribute the funding as is necessary for the project, in the example provided this would be to a nonprofit or private business. However, the applicant remains responsible for ensuring the terms and conditions of the performance agreement are complied with. Concerning the types of projects for an applicant with a partner

as mentioned above, a project must meet the definition of either a [community renewable energy project](#) or a [community energy resilience project](#) to be eligible. Please note the requirement that the project provide a direct benefit to a community in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development, or direct energy costs savings to families and small businesses. The proposed project must be located in Oregon but not in a city with a population of 500,000 or more. Microgrid enabling technologies must be paired with an existing or newly constructed renewable energy system to be eligible.

Question: Do all ODOE grant opportunities have the Oregon business site requirement?

ODOE Response: The Oregon business site requirement for project partners who are a private business was written into the legislation that created this grant program, it may not be included in other grant programs.

Question: Individual school districts qualify, but would the schools in that district qualify separately? Also, a private school is not a charter school, or is it?

ODOE Response: The school district would be the eligible applicant not an individual school. The eligible charter schools are public charter schools established under a specific statute ORS chapter 338, they are not private schools.

Question: The definition of 'public body' appears to include state agencies. Are state agencies permitted to apply for funds? 174.109 "Public body" defined. Subject to ORS 174.108, as used in the statutes of this state "public body" means state government bodies, local government bodies and special government bodies.

ODOE Response: Yes, state boards, commissions, departments, and divisions would be permitted to apply. The definition of "state government" is the executive department, the judicial department, and the legislative department. With the executive definition available in full online.

Question: Is our city is considered a qualifying community or would be disqualified because it is not a low-income community? We are in the midst of designing a new wastewater treatment plant to replace the existing wastewater plant, and we have entered into an agreement with a public-private partner to complete preliminary services to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain a new wastewater treatment plant next door to the existing plant. We are nearly at the 60% design stage. We are considering adding solar panels on our roofs to add energy resiliency to the wastewater treatment plant. We currently do not have batteries scoped but

would consider adding them if this was a necessary condition and we were able to get grant funding for the cost. Does our project meet the perimeters of this grant?

If our project does qualify, when would funds be released if we were selected? We have been awarded a WIFIA loan from the EPA for half of the funds for the wastewater treatment facility project. In addition, we will likely receive around a quarter of the funds for the project in a loan from Business Oregon.

ODOE Response: You do not need to be considered a qualifying community to apply to the program. The program’s legislation requires that 50 percent or more of the total grant funds be awarded for planning or developing community renewable energy projects that primarily serve one or more qualifying communities. 50 percent or more of the total grant funds are also to be awarded for projects that qualify as a community energy resilience projects. The grant program will competitively score complete eligible applications, and there are scoring criteria around the location in, benefits to, and involvement of qualifying communities.

While it may not be necessary to be eligible for grant funding, the costs associated with energy storage systems paired with an existing or newly constructed renewable energy generation system would be eligible for grant funding and may impact which opportunity announcement you are eligible for. I recommend you review the two different project types to see which definition your project best fits, as there are different funding limits associated with the construction of a community renewable energy project and a community energy resilience project.

- “Community renewable energy project” means one or more renewable energy systems, storage systems, microgrids or energy-related infrastructure that promote energy resilience, increase renewable energy generation or renewable energy storage capacity, and provide a direct benefit to a particular community in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development or direct energy costs savings to families and small businesses.
- “Community energy resilience project” means a community renewable energy project that includes utilizing one or more renewable energy systems to support the energy resilience of structures or facilities that are essential to the public welfare.

To be eligible you would need to provide information in your application demonstrating that the project will be located in and benefit a community in Oregon but outside a city with a population of 500,000 or more.

Successful applicants will be notified toward the end of August, and performance agreements would need to be signed 30 days after it was provided to the successful applicant. For planning grants, ODOE may release up to 30 percent of the grant moneys upon entering into a performance agreement with an applicant, to be spent on eligible planning costs. The remaining grant moneys would be available upon completion of the planning project. For

construction grants, ODOE may release up to 30 percent of the grant moneys upon entering into a performance agreement with an applicant, if the applicant demonstrates having:

- Taken meaningful steps to seek site control, including but not limited to an option to lease or purchase the site or an executed letter of intent or exclusivity agreement to negotiate an option to lease or purchase the site;
- Filed a request for interconnection with a host utility or appropriate transmission provider; and
- Met any other requirements provided by the department in the performance agreement.

The remaining grant moneys would be released upon project completion under the terms of the performance agreement.