

Energy Innovation Grant Program
2021
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Proposals Due: January 14, 2022 by 4:30 pm CT

Please refer to the following FAQ and the Energy Innovation Grant Program 2020 Application Instructions (Application Instructions) located here:

<https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/OEI/EnergyInnovationGrantProgram.aspx> .

A) Eligible Applicants:

Question A.1: Can a single eligible entity submit multiple applications?

Answer A.1: Yes. Per Application Instructions section 2.4., an eligible applicant may submit one application per Activity.

Question A.2: Are there restrictions on the size of manufacturers that are eligible for the grant program?

Answer A.2: No. The eligibility criteria set forth in Application section 1.2.2.1. do not contain size restrictions.

Question A.3: Can multiple eligible entities partner together to apply for a grant?

Answer A.3: Yes, however an application should designate a lead entity for project management and fiscal responsibility, and all partners must be eligible entities. The eligibility criteria is set forth in Application Instructions section 1.2.2.1.

Question A.4: Can eligible applicants apply on behalf of ineligible applicants, such as on behalf of residential customers?

Answer A.4: No. The eligible applicant described in Application Instructions section 1.2.2.1 must apply for projects that directly affect their host-owned facilities and fleets.

Question A.5: Can an ineligible applicant apply on behalf of an eligible applicant, such as on behalf of tenants in a commercial space?

Answer A.5: No. An ineligible applicant cannot act as a pass-through entity for an eligible applicant described in Application Instructions section 1.2.2.1.

Question A.6: What role can consultants play in assisting eligible applicants with the application process?

Answer A.6: A third party consultant may assist an eligible applicant in their application preparation and submission. While a consultant may, as a service to their client, submit the application to the Electronic Records Filing System (ERF), the application must be signed by the eligible applicant's own representatives. Additionally, eligible applicants and their consultants should note that pre-award costs are not allowed, meaning any expense incurred for the consultant's services prior to the project performance period would not be reimbursable by the grant. Consultants and eligible applicants should refer to Application Instructions section 2.2 for instructions on submitting the application to ERF.

Question A.7.: Can eligible applicants that are a part of the same umbrella organization submit separate grant applications as individual entities?

Answer A.7.: Yes, separate eligible entities under the same umbrella organization, such as an individual UW-System Campus, may apply as individual applicants. Applicants should share relevant information to differentiate from other applicants associated with the umbrella organization, such as separate Federal Employer Identifier Number (FEIN), address, DUNS number or CAGE code. See section 1.5 of the Application Instructions.

Question A.8: Where can I find a prior list of awardees or previous applications?

Answer A.8: Previous awardees and previous applications can be found on our EIGP website here: [PSC Energy Innovation Grant Program \(wi.gov\)](#) , or on the PSC Homepage [PSC homepage](#) and follow Docket # 9709-FG-2020 or Docket # 9709-FG-2018 for more information.

B) Eligible Activities:

Question B.1: Are multiple eligible activities allowed in a single application?

Answer B.1: No. Applicants must select a single activity per application, Eligible applicants may submit one

application per activity under section 2.4. For example If an applicant is interested in applying for a project in Activity 1 and Activity 2, they should prepare two complete and separate grant applications and upload them separately as two separate filings in the ERF system. Each activity type has a set amount of funding available and the applications in each of those categories will be processed as a group.

Question B.2: Is my project activity eligible if it is not expressly listed in the examples and descriptions provided for the Eligible Activities in section 1.2.2.2?

Answer B.2: The examples and parameters described in section 1.2.2.2 of the Application Instructions are from the Commission order establishing the scope of the 2021 round. Where there is ambiguity, it is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the eligibility of its project under a specific activity for the Commission to consider. The Commission ultimately determines what is eligible in this program, these decisions are not made at the staff level.

Question B.3: Can energy utilities be reimbursed if they are working as subcontractors in local government plans or projects?

Answer B.3: If the utility is providing a service for a fee to the grant project, they can be treated and reimbursed as a subcontractor.

Question B.4: Are eligible manufacturers able to apply for projects that do not affect their manufacturing processes, such as efficiency or renewable energy systems installation projects?

Answer B.4: Yes, eligible manufacturers are able to apply for all eligible activities under 1.2.2.2, including efficiency or renewable projects that occur at their facilities.

C) Funding Requests and Payments:

Question C.1: Will up-front payments or incremental requests for reimbursement be allowed?

Answer C.1: No. Per Application Instructions section 5.1., grant funds will be issued in a single reimbursement payment upon project completion and receipt of a complete and satisfactory final performance report and request for reimbursement, which must include detailed supporting documentation for all costs.

Question C.2: Will partial awards be made?

Answer C.2: The Commission reserves the right to make partial awards. The applicant should show all of the eligible and appropriate costs for their project in the overall budget. An applicant may request (as grant-funded) any portion of the total budget up to the maximum grant awards listed in Section 1.2.2.2 of the Application Instructions, with the remainder being applicant-funded (match). This is an open ended approach that allows the applicant to request what it needs to get the project done, and if possible, contribute its own funds thereby stretching the program's investment. For this reason, the amount of match (cost share) is used in project evaluation.

Question C.3: What is the timeframe for projects to occur?

Answer C.3: Grant agreements are set to a 12 month timeframe, with some flexibility to extend the project end date granted during the course of the project period based on request from the grantee and a case-by-case review.

D) Merit Review Criteria and Evaluation:

Question D.1: How do incentives and grants count towards cost share?

Answer D.1: All expected project funding should be described in responses to section 3.4.2 of the Application Instructions and referenced as applicable in other sections of the application narrative. The cost share reported in 3.4.2 and the Attachment B - Budget Sheet should be non-federal, and limited to secured or prescriptive sources of funding. For example, prescriptive Focus on Energy incentives may be counted, but competitive grant funding that has yet to be awarded may not be counted as match.

Question D2: Is a cost share (“match”) required for grant application?

Answer D.2: No. Cost share (“match”) is not required, but highly recommended. A project’s cost share (“match”) is calculated as a percentage of the total project cost from submitted applications and is provided to the Commission as information they may consider in making final decision on awards.

Question D.3: Are there different weights assigned to individual merit review criteria during the evaluation phase?

Answer D3: No. All merit review criteria are weighted equally by the evaluation committee, therefore applicants should respond to each. Note that the recommendations of the evaluation committee are one factor that the Commission may consider in making the final decision on awards.

E) Application Materials and Processes:

Question E.1: Will OEI review or provide feedback on draft application packages?

Answer E.1: No. Only complete and final application packages submitted to the Electronic Records Filing System (ERF) will be reviewed by the evaluation committee. Applicants are encouraged to contact a Focus on Energy advisor for feedback on draft application packages.

Question E.2: What subscriptions or accounts are required to submit an application?

Answer E.2: See section 1.5 of the Application Instructions. Applicants are advised to create subscriptions and accounts as early as possible to prevent delay in submission or processing of the application.

Question E.3: What American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Requirements should be considered or performed prior to submitting the application?

Answer E.3: Applicants should research and incorporate the Buy American and Davis Bacon Related Act provisions of ARRA to the extent possible in their application, these may have cost implications for the project. Applicants should study the activities discussed in Attachment C related to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the agreement linked in Section 1.3.3 of the Application Instructions related to State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review to anticipate what additional federal processing may be required of their project if it is selected for funding. For those projects requiring NEPA review, the Environmental Questionnaire is required with the application. Applicants should await further direction from the Commission on obtaining official NEPA and SHPO review and approval.

F) Eligible Costs:

Question F.1: Can ineligible costs, such as those activities listed in section 1.2.2.1 of the Application Instructions or those that are non-compliant with ARRA, be used as match or as part of the applicant’s cost share in the budget?

Answer F.1: No, all project costs, whether grant-funded or applicant-funded (or contributed to the applicant from a third party source) need to be reasonably associated with the eligible project activity, an eligible cost type (see Attachment B-Budget Sheet), and compliant with all state and federal provisions including ARRA.

Question F.2: Are pre-award costs allowed? Such as preparation of the application or materials required for the federal review steps?

Answer F.2: No, pre-award costs are not allowed. All costs must be incurred during the project performance period, which begins on the date the grant agreement is countersigned by the Commission and ends approximately one year from that date.

Question F.3: Is there a list of all of the types of eligible costs for this program?

Answer F.3: No, there is not a single list of eligible costs. Some items are expressly defined as ineligible, such as those activities listed in Section 1.2.3 of the Application Instructions. Please see Attachment B –Budget Sheet for allowable cost types. Any costs that the Commission deems ineligible during the application review may be removed from a project that is otherwise meritorious and selected for funding if the Commission so chooses.

Question F.4: Do federal loans count as “federal funding” when considering eligible project cost share “match”?

Answer: F.4: Yes, any federally-provided funding, would be ineligible to be included as an applicant’s cost share (or “match”). Examples of eligible sources of cost share are provided in section 3.4.2 of the Application Instructions.