

Prompting Questions for ODOE Application to USDOE Grid Resilience Funding

ODOE has prepared [a draft program narrative](#) for public review and comments as part of our application for [federal funds available under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#). The program narrative has been drafted by staff following research and initial outreach with utilities, other state agencies, and other stakeholders. We welcome your thoughts and comments as we prepare to finalize our application to the U.S. Department of Energy.

In preparing this application, it is ODOE's intent to establish criteria and methods primarily for disbursing grants during the first year of this five-year program — and to revisit these objectives, criteria, and metrics over the next year with the input of an advisory committee to consider a broader scope of projects that can mitigate hazards beyond wildfire and further support disadvantaged communities.

We recognize that the need for investments in projects that enhance the resilience and reliability of our electric grid far exceeds the funding available under this program. In creating this program narrative, we sought to prioritize the community benefits provided by wildfire mitigation but also to focus on administrative efficiency during this initial year, so that Oregon can maximize the funding available to improve our state's resilience.

Please review the [draft program narrative](#) and visit [our online portal](#) to respond to the following prompting questions by **September 2, 2022.**

Objectives and Metrics

- Do the proposed provisional objectives seem appropriate for investments during the first year of the program?
- Are there other metrics that would help ODOE measure success during year one or metrics we could collect to inform future efforts?
- What metrics do you recommend to help us assess whether the benefits from these projects will accrue to disadvantaged communities or environmental justice communities?

Criteria

- Is the prioritization of projects related to wildfire and disadvantaged communities appropriate for the provisional criteria in year one? Why or why not?
- ODOE will be establishing an advisory committee to provide recommendations and to support prioritization of resilience projects that are: identified by and located within disadvantaged and/or Tribal communities, designed to address multiple-hazard grid disruptions, and align with mitigation strategies in the forthcoming State Energy Security Plan. How should ODOE structure and support an advisory committee to meet these objectives?
- This proposal identifies specific organizations that would be invited to join an advisory committee. Are there other voices that should be represented?



Methods

- Are the criteria ODOE identified specific to wildfire risk areas, but also tailored narrowly enough to focus investments appropriately?
- If there is sufficient funding to seek a second round of applications, should ODOE prioritize funding to utilities that were not funded in the first round?
- What considerations should ODOE make to support applications from utilities who wish to partner on an application?
- Are the maximum award caps appropriately sized?
- The legislation establishing this program states that priority should be given to projects that “generate the greatest community benefit” in reducing the likelihood and consequence of disruptive events. ODOE staff have struggled with how one might compare the value of undergrounding a power line in Eastern Oregon with the installation of a microgrid on the Oregon coast. Due to the difficulty in prioritizing between projects across all hazards, various types of eligible measures, and spanning across the vast geographical diversity that comprises our state, ODOE is proposing direct awards based on specific criteria rather than competitive scoring during the first year of funding for this program. However, the agency is interested in hearing ideas on how future applications could be competitively scored. What ideas can you offer to help us plan for competitive scoring in future years of the program?

Funding

- What comments or concerns do you have regarding ODOE’s proposal under this heading?

Equity

- The U.S. Department of Energy has provided broad guidance on implementation of the Justice40 initiative. In doing so, they offer three methods of identifying disadvantaged communities. These include: [the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#); [the United States Department of Energy’s Energy Justice Dashboard](#); or a state identified method that uses multiple data sets which is capable of comparison to the other existing tools. Specific to the concept of enhancing grid resilience, what are your thoughts on these tools? Can you recommend existing data sets or tools we should consider as part of a state-specific approach?
- How can ODOE support and encourage projects that benefit disadvantaged communities or Tribal communities?
- Are there other ways ODOE can support workforce diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility?

Technical Assistance and Administration

- What types of technical assistance content would be most beneficial to applicants?
- What types of technical assistance content would be most beneficial to disadvantaged communities in planning future projects?

General Comments

What other feedback do you have on this proposal?

