



## **Opportunity Announcement for the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program**

### **Opportunity Announcement #25-045**

Grant dollars to support developing a community renewable energy project that also qualifies as a community energy resilience project.

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#### **Schedule**

The program schedule for the fourth opportunity round of the Community Renewable Energy Grant program is located on the [program webpage](#).

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## Section 1: Purpose and General Information

### 1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Community Renewable Energy Grant Program opportunity announcement is to create an application, competitive review, and grant award process that follows the requirements of the legislation and rules under which the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program is administered to determine which projects will receive grant funding.

### 1.2 Objectives

The Community Renewable Energy Grant Program provides grants to:

- Support offsetting the cost of planning and developing community renewable energy projects;
- Make community renewable energy projects economically feasible for qualifying communities;
- Promote small-scale renewable energy projects; and
- Provide direct benefits to communities across this state in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development, or direct energy cost savings to families and small businesses.

This opportunity announcement aims to support developing a community renewable energy project that qualifies as a community energy resilience project.

### 1.3 Grant availability

The Department has **\$12,000,000** in grant funds available for four open Community Renewable Energy Grant Program opportunity announcements. 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. A minimum of \$400,000 is reserved for planning projects that qualify as a community energy resilience project, \$200,000 for planning projects that do not qualify as a community energy resilience project, \$8,000,000 for construction projects that qualify as a community energy resilience project, and \$3,400,000 for construction projects that do not qualify as a community energy resilience project. The Department may opt not to award a grant to an applicant even if funding remains if the system in the application is determined to not be technically feasible, does not meet minimum technical requirements for renewable energy systems, would not operate in accordance with the representations made by the applicant, or does not score highly enough during the competitive review. If there are not enough complete and eligible applications that are awarded a grant to use all of one of the reserved minimum budget allocations, the remaining funds may be awarded to other project types based upon the evaluation of the criteria within the four opportunity announcements.

The maximum grant available for developing a community renewable energy project, whether it qualifies as a community energy resilience project or not, is \$1,000,000. If the grant is for a community energy resilience project the grant may be used to cover up to 100 percent of the

eligible total costs associated with the project.

Qualifying 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.

**This is a reimbursable grant.** Two advance payments of projected grant monies are available upon specific requirements being met, including a 30% preliminary payment and up to 30% of additional grant monies not to exceed 30% of project costs for an in-progress payment are the only funding available prior to completion of the grant eligible project. Applicants must have the funding or financing to complete the grant eligible project. The applicant's ability to fund or finance the renewable energy project to completion will be scored in the competitive review. Grant disbursement occurs after the grant eligible project is complete and in operation and after the Department has approved the performance agreement final report. A description of the grant and payment processes is in Section 4 of the opportunity announcement.

#### 1.4 Eligibility

An applicant must be one of Oregon's federally recognized Indian Tribes, a public body, or a consumer-owned utility. See [ORS 174.109 for a definition of public body, and HB 2021 Section 29 \(2021\) for definitions of "consumer-owned utility" and "public body"](#). An applicant may partner with another entity, or entities, including with another entity that would qualify as an applicant or with a federal agency, nonprofit entity, private business located in Oregon, or owner of rental property in Oregon.

Eligible community renewable energy projects must utilize one or more renewable energy system technologies. Eligible renewable energy system technologies include:

- Energy generation:
  - Biomass
  - Solar
  - Geothermal
  - Hydroelectric
  - Wind
  - Landfill gas
  - Biogas
  - Wave
  - Tidal
  - Ocean thermal energy technology
- Energy storage
- Microgrid technologies
- Electric vehicle charging

A new energy storage system, microgrid technology, or electric vehicle charging station must be paired with an existing or newly constructed renewable energy generation system listed above.

Other eligibility requirements for a grant to develop a community renewable energy project include:

- The project must be located in, and benefit, a community in Oregon and must not be located in a city with a population of 500,000 or more.
- The project must provide a direct benefit to a community in the form of increased community energy resilience, local jobs, economic development, or direct energy cost savings to families and small businesses.
- The project must not exceed 20 MW of nameplate capacity, if the project is for generating renewable energy.
- The project must operate for at least five years.
- The applicant must meet all the application requirements detailed in Sections 1 and 2 of this opportunity announcement.

Costs eligible to be covered by a Community Renewable Energy Grant project development grant are detailed in [OAR 330-250-0100](#).

## **Section 2: Application Requirements & Process**

### **2.1 Submission of Applications**

Applications must be submitted through the Department's [online application portal](#) with all the requested information. Access to the application portal and associated materials are available on the [Oregon Department of Energy website](#).

Applications that are submitted improperly or are incomplete may be rejected. The Department must receive applications no later than the due date provided on the [program webpage](#).

In the application, the applicant must list a person as the point of contact. The Department will contact this designated responsible party with technical questions; it is the job of the designated point of contact to coordinate and submit responses to the Department.

A complete grant application includes, at a minimum:

- (1) A submitted online application with all required information completed.
- (2) Applicant eligibility information and contact details.
- (3) Information about any partner organizations and their roles, including:
  - (a) For any partner that is a private business, documentation that the partner has a business site in Oregon.
  - (b) For any partner that is an owner of rental property, documentation that the

partner owns rental property in Oregon.

(4) A description of consultation with stakeholders including:

- (a) Evidence the application has been drafted in consultation with regional stakeholders for the purpose of ensuring feasibility. This must include a description of the applicant's consultation with regional stakeholders and community groups, and any additional community engagement process as part of developing the project development grant application.
- (b) Evidence 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 high-level assessment of the impacts of the proposed project on existing utility infrastructure and the estimated costs for interconnection of the proposed project. Evidence may include:
  - (A) A letter confirming consultation from the electric utility serving the communities covered by a community renewable energy project.
  - (B) Utility interconnection application or interconnection agreement.

(5) A description of the project including:

- (a) Clear overall project description that includes the project design, the equipment proposed to be used in the project, any engineering studies or calculations already done, status of the utility consultation, and planning already done.
- (b) A description of the project location including details of its location in Oregon and not in a city with a population of 500,000 or more. An assessment of the suitability of the site, and the degree to which the applicant has secured site control.
- (c) If the project is for generating renewable energy, include information on:
  - (A) The equipment technical specifications, including manufacturer's information and warranties for the selected technology and all other major project equipment, including information that demonstrates the system will operate for at least five years.
  - (B) The nameplate capacity (kW).
  - (C) The projected amount of net energy the project will generate, in kWh per year.
  - (D) A renewable resource assessment demonstrating adequate renewable resource availability for the proposed system operations. The resource assessment must describe the type of resource available, explain how the applicant evaluated and estimated the resource availability, and how the

system will ensure access to the resource.

(d) If the project is for energy storage, include information on:

- (A) The equipment technical specifications, including manufacturer's information and warranties for the selected technology and all other major project equipment, include information that demonstrates the system will operate for at least five years.
- (B) Nameplate power capacity in kW.
- (C) The projected amount of net energy the project will supply, in kWh per year.
- (D) Proposed operational use cases for the energy storage project, including emergency backup power, providing grid services, demand reduction, arbitrage, or any other planned uses.

(e) If the community renewable energy project will add capacity to or be paired with an existing renewable energy system, for example pairing energy storage and/or microgrid enabling technologies with an existing solar photovoltaic array, the applicant must include a description of the existing renewable energy system.

(6) A project management plan that contains:

- (a) List of project team members, their roles and lines of authority, and experience with similar projects.
- (b) A detailed construction plan and project schedule with major milestones including the target operational date of the system. The schedule must show construction beginning within 12 months of execution of the performance agreement and will be completed within 36 months of execution of the performance agreement.
- (c) A description of how the applicant will manage planning, construction, and system start-up. Include a commissioning plan if developed.
- (d) A detailed description of the project operations plan post construction that demonstrates the project will operate as represented for at least five years, and for the life of the project. The applicant should show how the project will be operated, the estimated costs, how maintenance and operations will be adequately funded, and that there will be sufficient experienced personnel to operate the plant.
- (e) Information on the number and types of jobs directly connected to the awarding of the grant that will be:
  - (A) Created by the project; and
  - (B) Sustained throughout construction and operation of the project.

(7) A detailed description of the community benefit and equity considerations, or other documentation of the extent to which the community renewable energy project would

be located in and/or will serve one or more qualifying communities. This should include a description of the location, the communities served, and the community benefits. It could also include, but not be limited to:

- (a) A description of qualifying communities' involvement in project development and operations.
  - (b) A description of any partnerships with qualifying communities.
  - (c) A description of outreach done to qualifying communities. This could include, but is not limited to, descriptions of surveys of the local community, attendance or participation at public meetings, and community ideas and recommendations incorporated in project plan.
  - (d) A description of any equity framework used by applicant in developing the project.
  - (e) A description of the level of direct energy cost savings to families and small businesses that will result from the project.
  - (f) A description of the level of economic development that will result from the project.
- (8) The grant amount requested and project budget, submitted as a supplemental document using the spreadsheet provided through the online application. The budget document shall include:
- (a) The anticipated total project cost, which must contain an itemized list of costs designated as either eligible or non-eligible for the grant. Breakdown of cost could show equipment and materials, labor, engineering, and other soft costs.
  - (b) A description of any other incentives that the applicant has been or may be awarded that are directly related to the renewable energy system in the application.
  - (c) A description of the applicant's project financing plan that includes potential sources for funding during construction, and to cover the balance of project costs beyond the grant amount and other incentives.
  - (d) A description of any other funds being utilized to complete the project, including information about the source of the funds.
- (9) If applicable, a description of how the community renewable energy project would integrate with broader community energy and environmental goals.
- (10) The following required supplemental documents:
- (a) Written authorization from the applicant's governing body allowing submission of the application.
  - (b) For any partner that is a public body, written authorization from the partner's governing body allowing submission of the application.
  - (c) A statement of how the applicant will comply with applicable state and local laws and regulations, and that states the applicant will notify the appropriate agencies



and obtain the required licenses and permits.

(d) The project budget document described above in subsection (8).

## **2.2 Other Incentives or Grants**

In the application, an applicant must indicate other incentives that have been or may be awarded that are directly related to the renewable energy system in the application. The amount of any potential grant will be reduced if in combination with other incentives the amount exceeds 100 percent of the project costs.

## **2.3 Questions**

The program has [Frequently Asked Questions](#) available online and encourages additional questions from potential applicants through [ODOE's customer service portal](#). New questions and answers submitted will be updated in the Frequently Asked Questions and posted online for access by all applicants.

# **Section 3: Review Process**

## **3.1 Overview of Review Process**

The Department will conduct a review of the applications received in response to this opportunity announcement. The Department will evaluate all applications for completeness. The Department will conduct a competitiveness review of all complete applications; based on the competitive review results, certain applications may be offered a performance agreement.

The only information the Department will consider in the review process is that which is submitted by the applicant through the application process. Attempts to improperly influence the review process by submitting additional information or contacting the agency review team with additional information will result in application denial. All comments and questions should be submitted via email to [community.grants@energy.oregon.gov](mailto:community.grants@energy.oregon.gov).

## **3.2 Eligibility and Completeness Review**

Department staff will first review all applications on a pass/fail basis to determine if each application is complete, meaning it includes all the minimum required elements described in section 2.1 of this opportunity announcement. This review may begin upon submission of an application. The applicant's failure to comply with the instructions or failure to submit a complete application will result in the application being found incomplete and rejected. Only those applications that meet the minimum requirements will be considered for further review. If the applicant is relying on information in attachments, the information in the attachments should be readily identifiable with explicit references noted in the application.

If the Department finds that the application is complete, the Department will notify the applicant that the application will move into the competitive review process. The Department will not process incomplete applications, though the Department may request additional information from an applicant if necessary to support the competitive review process. The Department will provide written notification to applicants that submit incomplete applications

stating their application is not moving to the competitive review. If an application is found to be incomplete, the applicant may apply in a future opportunity announcement.

### 3.3 Competitive Review

The requested information detailed in Section 2.1 is the minimum required information for an application to be considered complete. Some of the scoring criteria in Section 3.3 are optional and are related to program priorities directed under Oregon Laws 2021, chapter 508, section 30(10):

- (a) Include community energy resilience projects.
- (b) Demonstrate significant prior investments in energy efficiency measures at the project location or will result in aggregate improvements to demand response capabilities.
- (c) Are for projects located in qualifying communities across the state.
- (d) When applicable, are for projects constructed in part or in whole by disadvantaged business enterprises, emerging small businesses, or businesses that are owned by minorities, women or disabled veterans.
- (e) Include inclusive hiring and promotion policies for workers working on the projects.
- (f) Incorporate equity metrics for 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.
- (g) Help the applicants achieve goals included in the applicants' natural hazard mitigation plans as approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Applicants that demonstrate they meet these criteria may score higher during the competitive review process. The online application portal will provide details on how to submit this information.

Community Renewable Energy Project Development Competitive Review Criteria		Points
Project Strength		
<b>TEAM &amp; PROJECT DESCRIPTION:</b> Quality of project team based on clearly defined roles that show a sufficient number of team members (including partners) with the required experience in relation to the renewable energy project's need and complexity; and a complete project description summary that adequately describes the project to be developed.		10
<b>PLAN &amp; SCHEDULE:</b> Strength of the renewable energy project plan, the applicant's ability to guide it to completion, and the quality of the project schedule details that demonstrate the applicant can meet grant timeline requirements: 12 months to start installation and 36 months to fully operational.		15
<b>BUDGET &amp; FINANCES:</b> The demonstration of the applicant's ability to fund or finance the renewable energy project to completion in order to qualify for grant		10

disbursement (grant is reimbursable).	
<b>RESILIENCE:</b> The renewable energy project's ability to maintain the availability of energy needed to support and increase the community energy resilience of structures or facilities that are essential to the public welfare, level of importance of the critical public services, how many people will it serve.	10
<b>Equity Priorities</b>	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION &amp; EJ COMMUNITY IMPACT:</b> The renewable energy project is located in an Environmental Justice community and the degree to which the project will primarily serve and provide direct benefits to Environmental Justice community members.	5
<b>EJ COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN:</b> The quality of the community outreach plan to include EJ community members and regional stakeholders in the siting, planning, designing, or evaluating of the proposed project. This could include, but is not limited to, descriptions of surveys of the local community, attendance or participation at public meetings, community ideas and recommendations incorporated in the project plan.	5
<b>EJ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT &amp; LEADERSHIP:</b> The level of community engagement in developing the grant application for a renewable energy project, including the degree to which EJ community members and community groups are involved in the project leadership, including project partners.	5
<b>EQUITY FRAMEWORK:</b> The degree to which an equity framework(s) implementation and/or evaluation of the renewable energy project.	5
<b>PROCUREMENT POLICIES:</b> The degree to which disadvantaged business enterprises, emerging small businesses, or businesses that are owned by minorities, women, or disabled veterans are incorporated in the renewable energy project.	5
<b>HIRING POLICIES:</b> The degree to which inclusive hiring and promotion policies are incorporated in the renewable energy project.	2.5
<b>Program Priorities</b>	
<b>PRIOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY INVESTMENTS:</b> The level of significant prior investments in energy efficiency measures and/or the number of aggregate improvements to demand response capabilities at the project location.	2.5
<b>NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN:</b> The extent to which the renewable energy project assists the applicant in achieving goals included in a related natural hazard mitigation plan approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.	5
<b>BUSINESS AND FAMILY DIRECT ENERGY COST SAVINGS:</b> The level of the renewable energy project's anticipated direct energy cost savings to families and small businesses (amount of savings predicted relative to the grant request amount, number of families and businesses that see direct savings, diversity and types of families and businesses that see the direct benefits).	2.5

<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:</b> Not including job creation, the types and level of economic development the renewable energy project will provide. (Consider increases to average incomes, ensure sustainable economic growth, innovation, workforce development, business retention and expansion, and promotion of an environment that supports entrepreneurship and small business development).	2.5
<b>JOB CREATION:</b> Level of estimated local jobs created by the construction, installation, and operations of the renewable energy project's lifetime, in relation to the estimated size/cost of the renewable energy project.	5
<b>Project Diversity</b>	
<b>DIVERSITY:</b> Geographic diversity including locations of prior grantees and the diversity of technology, resource types and renewable energy project/system size.	10

Applications will be ranked based on the competitive review scores and recommendations from competitive review committee. Final recommendations will be determined by the department. Applicants that are recommended for awards may be offered a Performance Agreement.

The Department will notify applicants of the competitive review outcome in writing. Projects not selected may be eligible to apply again during a future opportunity announcement.

### 3.4 Offer of Performance Agreement

Following the competitive review, successful applications may be offered a performance agreement that contains the terms associated with the grant and the requirements for disbursement of grant funds. The grant amount offered in the performance agreement may be less than requested. The Department will communicate to the applicant the conditions surrounding the offer of a performance agreement. Applicants will have 30 calendar days to respond in writing to the offer, after which the Department may revoke the offer.

The performance agreement will include the terms provided in [OAR 330-250-0130](#), and may include additional terms, such as reporting frequency. In accordance with OAR 330-250-0130 (4), failure to agree to the terms of a performance agreement may result in the Department rejecting the grant application.

## Section 4: Grant Process and Payment

### 4.1 Reporting

Once a Performance Agreement is executed, successful applicants will be required to submit project progress reports as specified in the performance agreement.

After verified completion of construction, reports will be required annually for the first five years of the project's operation. These annual reports will include information on jobs provided by the project, quantity of energy produced monthly and annually, and other information outlined in the Performance Agreement.

## 4.2 Amendments

Performance agreements may be amended only as provided under [OAR 330-250-0140](#). The grantee must submit a written amendment request to the director to amend a performance agreement. Prior to approval of an amendment, the grantee must demonstrate that the project with the proposed change will continue to meet the requirements in statute, rule, and the opportunity announcement, as well as continuing to be technically feasible, and operating essentially as originally proposed. The grantee has the responsibility to provide complete technical documentation that will support a case for the proposed amendment. The Department may accept or deny amendments in its sole discretion without justification or documentation.

The Department will evaluate amendments to determine if the change would have affected the outcome of the competitive review, which may result in pro-rating the award amount or denial of the amendment request. An amendment request will not result in an increased award amount, even if the output of the project or the project costs increase.

## 4.3 Disbursing Grant Award

Once a Performance Agreement is executed, up to 30 percent of the grant funds may be released on request if the applicant demonstrates:

- They have 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; and
- 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.

In addition, the Agency shall disburse an in-progress amount up to 30 percent of additional Grant Monies not to exceed 30 percent of project cost if the applicant demonstrates:

1. They have requested and fulfilled all requirements for a preliminary payment; and
2. A minimum of 25% of projected Grant Monies on eligible costs prior to the request for the in-progress payment request has been paid or incurred; and
3. Construction or installation of the renewable energy system has started at the project location or will start no later than 60 days of the submission of the request, and not later than the required construction start date; and
4. Submission of an updated project budget detailing eligible and ineligible costs along with estimated project completion date.

The remaining grant funds will be released upon verification of the completion of the project and submission of the final report and other required materials from the Performance Agreement. The final distribution amount may be reduced based on the CPA verification letter

that may be required in the final report as specified in the Performance Agreement. Grant amounts cannot exceed the cost of the project less other incentives.

#### **4.4 Inspection & Audit**

The Department reserves the right to conduct a physical inspection of all projects and to audit all documentation relating to a project for which a grantee and the Department have entered into a performance agreement.

## **Section 5: Additional Information**

### **5.1 Public Information, Confidentiality**

The State of Oregon's Public Records Law (ORS 192.311 through 192.478) applies to filings and applications submitted to the Department. The law states every person has a right to inspect any public record of a public body, subject to certain exceptions. Applications are public records, and the Department may be required by law to disclose information in the application to the public on request. An applicant may request confidentiality of certain information in its application by marking the information confidential. Marking information does not guarantee that it will be kept confidential, however, and the Department will make any decisions regarding public disclosure of information contained in this application in accordance with Oregon Public Records Law.

Grant funding from the state of Oregon may be reported on [Oregon Transparency](#), a state agency tool available for Oregonians to learn about how state government works, taxes are used, and more. The data and information on this website are provided to users for general knowledge and information. It excludes data and information that is confidential, protected, or private under state and federal laws, and is unaudited.

The Department may publicly announce awarded grantees under this program. The public announcement may include but are not limited to: the system owner's name, partner's names, type of project and/or description, location of project, size of the project, total cost of the project, and the awarded grant amount.

### **5.2 Reservation of Department Rights**

The Department reserves all rights regarding this opportunity announcement, including, without limitation, the right to:

1. Amend, delay, or cancel the opportunity announcement without liability if the Department finds it is in the best interest of the State of Oregon to do so;
2. Not consider any or all applications received upon finding that it is in the best interest of the State of Oregon to do so;
3. Deem incomplete any application that fails to comply with all prescribed opportunity announcement procedures and requirements; and
4. Allocate a grant amount less than the amount requested by applicant, at its discretion.

### **5.3 No Obligation**

The Department is not obligated as a result of the submission or acceptance of an application to award a grant to an applicant.

### **5.4 Sunset Information**

If awarded, a grant applicant's performance agreement will outline the timeframe required to receive the grant award. In general, Community Renewable Energy Grant performance agreements provide 12 months from the date of the agreement for the applicant to begin construction and 36 months for the project to be completed. Extensions to the final completion period may be granted for a reasonable time frame at the sole discretion of the Department, but in any event only if good cause to extend the deadline is demonstrated.