County Energy Resilience Grant Program

FAQs

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Program Overview

What is the county energy resilience grant program?

The County Energy Resilience Grant Program is a new state-funded program that provides grants to Oregon counties, up to $50,000, to develop a county energy resilience plan. The program is administered by the Oregon Department of Energy.

Are counties required to participate in the program or do this planning?

Participation in the program is voluntary. Counties who do not participate in the program are not required to complete an energy resilience plan. Counties who choose to participate in the program will be required to complete an energy resilience plan that meets the requirements of the program.

What are the eligibility requirements? If our county has an energy resilience plan can we participate in the program?

All Oregon counties are eligible to participate in the County Energy Resilience Grant Program. Counties with existing energy resilience plans, or energy plans that incorporate aspects of energy resilience, will likely be able to participate in the County Energy Resilience Program to update their plan per the requirements of HB 3630. If your county already has an energy plan, contact the program coordinator to discuss eligibility.

Where can I find the requirements for the energy resilience plan?

The requirements for the energy resilience plans are detailed in Section 5 of HB 3630. They are also provided in the program applications (available on our program page).

How does the application process work?

Counties submit an application, available on our program page, to the program email: county.resilience@energy.oregon.gov. Each county should submit their own application, unless working in a cohort. There is an application for individual counties, as well as a cohort specific application. The program coordinator reviews the applications for completeness and eligibility requirements. Following this, counties will proceed into the grant agreement process with the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) and then ODOE will disburse funding upfront, at one time, not as a cost-reimbursement model.

How does the cohort option for the program work?

Counties may choose to work together to develop a multi-county energy resilience plan. Cohorts can pool the funds offered through the County Energy Resilience Program to complete their plan. There is no maximum or minimum number requirement for cohorts. However, if more than five counties choose to work together in a cohort, there may be additional review, and time, required for the grant agreement process.

Cohorts should submit one application together that identifies a lead county for the program. This county is responsible for the program processes and paperwork and upholding the program

requirements on behalf of the cohort. This county will complete the performance agreement with and receive the funds disbursement from ODOE on behalf of the cohort.

There is a cohort-specific application available on our program page. All participating counties must sign the application. Additionally, each individual county must adopt the energy resilience plan and incorporate it into their natural hazard mitigation plan.

Building off of Oregon Department of Emergency Management or Oregon Economic Development District county groupings for cohort structures could present opportunities for efficiencies with existing county collaboration structures.

What costs are allowed under this program?

County Energy Resilience Program funds may be used to pay for county staff time to work on the plan, as well as contracting with a technical assistance provider. Outreach costs for plan development such as materials and event supplies, as well as travel costs related to plan development are allowed. Additional costs, as necessary for plan development, are also permitted. Funds must only be spent on expenses necessary for plan development. ODOE staff can help with determining what costs are allowable.

Can we use energy resilience program funds as match for NHMP planning grants, EMPG, or other grant programs?

County Energy Resilience Grant Program funds may be able to be used as match for other programs, provided this is allowed by those programs and does not inhibit completing the energy resilience planning work as required under this program.

For questions on use of these funds as match for the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG) or Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) planning grants, please contact Oregon Department of Emergency Management staff.

Project Development

What should our plan look like?

Plans must meet the requirements of HB 3630, but beyond this we encourage counties to shape the plan to best meet their local needs. We encourage counties to look for synergies with other ongoing planning work such as for economic development, emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation, and local energy goals. We have provided a few community energy and energy resilience plans in our plan development resources document (available on our program page) to offer some examples and ideas.

What are examples of community energy resilience?

Actions communities may pursue to increase energy resilience include developing microgrids, investing in local renewable energy, increasing generator capacity, increasing fuel storage capacity, designating fuel points of distribution to receive emergency fuel supplies, and expanding energy storage options. This is not an exhaustive list of energy resilience actions. Communities can determine the set of activities that best meet their energy resilience needs.

What is meant by community resilience centers and communication zones?

Community resilience centers are places residents visit in their daily lives and serve as gathering places that provide essential services for community members during disruptive events. Specific to energy resilience, these centers are equipped to provide residents access to energy services during disruptions such as charging stations, heating and cooling, and air filtration. This may be achieved by the provision of energy storage systems, microgrids, alternative energy sources, and/or generators. Communication zones support resident communication via charging of mobile devices and may also provide additional communication resources and supplies such as satellite phones, portable cell phone towers, and ham radios, as well as serve as a central repository to distribute information amongst the community. In most cases, community resilience centers and communication zones will be co-located; however, they can be in separate locations for some facilities if that better facilitates community needs.

What is social vulnerability?

Social vulnerability refers to the level of resilience of communities in the response to external stressors such as disasters. Socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, age, racial and ethnic minority status, housing type, and vehicle access are examples of factors that affect social vulnerability, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

How are environmental justice communities defined?

Environmental justice communities include communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, 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, as defined in HB 4077, 2022 Regular Session.

What are the requirements for engagement with environmental justice communities and the public?

In HB 3630 counties are required to engage with representatives from environmental justice communities to identify and map communities that experience social vulnerabilities. This engagement should be meaningful: counties should create accessible opportunities for substantive conversations and utilize the information they receive to help shape their plans. We also encourage counties to engage with environmental justice communities more broadly, on other aspects of plan development.

As some of the groups identified in the definition of environmental justice communities may apply to the majority of a county's population, e.g. rural communities, we encourage counties to shape this outreach to be as meaningful as possible in the context of their community: counties should focus on the intention of this requirement in shaping their outreach, which is to engage with the groups in their community traditionally underrepresented in public processes and most vulnerable to and impacted by environmental issues to better identify and support these communities.

We also encourage counties to create additional opportunities for public involvement in the plan development process. Community members can help identify issues, come up with solutions, and help champion the plan and its projects. Community engagement can result in a more innovative, robust, and supported product. We also recommend that counties align outreach asks for energy resilience plan development with other ongoing outreach as possible. Find more resources for public engagement planning in the plan development resources document.

How are short-term, medium-term, and long-term power outages defined?

Our guidance for these definitions are the following:

- Short-term: hours
- Medium-term: days
- Long-term: weeks

What information do we need to map for distribution lines?

Mapping to level of main power lines for distribution (feeders) will likely be sufficient for planning needs under this program; greater detail will be needed for site-specific project planning. Particularly relevant information to gather related to the distribution network in addition to locations of feeders may include: load availability on feeders, public safety power shutoff locations, areas that experience more frequent or longer duration outages, and locations for energy generation and/or microgrid development with co-benefits for community and utility needs.

There are municipalities in our county that are not part of our natural hazard mitigation plan. Should we incorporate them into the energy resilience planning?

All municipalities should be considered in the energy resilience plan for a county. We encourage collaboration with municipalities to gather information and work through strategies for the energy resilience plan.

Is there information that could go in our plans that needs to stay confidential for energy security reasons?

Some of the information that may come up in the planning process could be energy security confidential, particularly information related to energy infrastructure mapping. Counties should prepare for how they would like to handle energy secure information, if it arises, in advance of conversations with utility providers. Options could include achieving plan requirements without accessing such information, utilizing a redacted appendix that is not included in publicly available versions of the plan, or creating resources that share approximate information. Counties should work with their utility providers to find a suitable approach and ensure that their approach complies with all public information laws.

Resources

What additional resources are available to help a county complete the plan?

We have put together a plan development resources list to support counties in developing their plans. These resources include a technical assistance provider list, example plans, sources for mapping requirements, and more. We will continue to add to and update this resources list. The [program coordinator](#) is also available to answer questions and help provide connections to other resources.

Does ODOE have a list of technical assistance providers that can be contracted with to complete the work?

Yes, our plan development resources document provides a list of entities that may be available to work on the energy resilience plans. The provision of this list is not an Oregon Department of Energy endorsement of these organizations. ODOE does not certify or guarantee their services. If you have an addition for this list, please contact [county.resilience@energy.oregon.gov.](mailto:county.resilience@energy.oregon.gov)

What is the role of local utilities in plan development?

Under HB 3630, public utilities operating or serving customers within the boundaries of a county developing an energy resilience plan are directed to comply with information requests from the county regarding energy infrastructure in the county. Utilities should make reasonable efforts to assist with information provision provided it is not exempt from disclosure.

Program Completion

What are the reporting requirements for the program?

During the program, there will be two interim reports: due October 31, 2024 and March 31, 2025. The ODOE program coordinator will send out the report templates to counties in advance of the deadlines.

By the program deadline, August 1, 2025, counties will need to complete a program completion form, which is a self-attestation form identifying that they have met the program requirements and spent the funds on approved costs. Counties must also submit a copy of their completed plan.

What happens if plan is not complete or all requirements are not met by the deadline? Will the money be revoked?

If a plan is not complete, or all requirements for the plan content are not achieved by the program deadline of August 1, 2025, counties can request an extension of their performance agreement to December 31, 2025 in the required August program completion report. Counties who receive an extension will be required to submit another interim report, due October 31, 2025, and another program completion form, as well as a copy of their final plan by December 31, 2025.

If a county has not completed their plan, or achieved all requirements for the plan content, by December 31, 2025, the county will be required to demonstrate that a good faith effort to complete the plan and requirements has been undertaken. ODOE will request this information as part of the December program completion form. ODOE may request additional information as needed.

ODOE will not request a return of funds provided that a good faith effort to complete the plan and requirements has been undertaken. ODOE reserves the right to revoke funds if a county cannot demonstrate that a good faith effort was undertaken to try and complete the plan and meet the requirements by December 31, 2025. ODOE will require a copy of the draft plan at this date. ODOE may also request an extension of the performance agreement to the anticipated termination date for the plan. Once the county has completed their plan, ODOE requests a copy of the final version, and if applicable, ODOE will also request an accounting of final use of funds and may request a return of any unspent funds.

What happens if we don't spend all the funds?

ODOE will request a return of any unspent funds upon plan completion, unless the amount is nominal.

How does our county achieve compliance with the incorporation of the energy resilience plan into our natural hazard mitigation plan?

Counties can determine how to most effectively incorporate their energy resilience plans into their natural hazard mitigation plans (NHMPs). If you have specific questions about how to

incorporate your plan related to NHMP requirements, please contact the Oregon Department of Emergency Management.

Counties should incorporate their energy resilience plans as part of their next round of NHMP updates and pursue approval of the updated NHMP in accordance with their regular 5-year update and approval process with the Oregon Department of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Are counties required to adopt the energy resilience plan before the program deadline?

Counties who participate in this program should formally adopt the energy resilience plan, as stipulated in HB 3630. However, it is not a requirement of the program that it is complete before the deadline to allow the time needed for the public process entailed in adoption.