**Questions and Answers**

GFO-23-306

Grid-Supportive Transportation Electrification

March 7, 2024

The most up-to-date solicitation documents (including the solicitation manual) are available at the solicitation webpage: [GFO-23-306 - Grid-Supportive Transportation Electrification](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-01/gfo-23-306-grid-supportive-transportation-electrification)

The following answers are based on California Energy Commission (CEC) staff’s interpretation of the questions received. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to review the purpose of the solicitation and to determine whether their proposed project is eligible for funding by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation. The CEC cannot give advice as to whether a particular project is eligible for funding because not all proposal details are known.

Unless indicated otherwise, all section numbers identified are from the solicitation manual (for example, “Section II.B” refers to Section II.B of the Solicitation Manual). The solicitation manual is Attachment 00 found on the webpage linked above.

# **Technical Questions**

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| **#** | **Question** | **CEC Response** |
| 1 | **What scopes of work would qualify for GFO-23-306?** | Applicants should review Project Focus (Section I.C) where project requirements are listed to determine which Group their proposed technology and project best responds to. Applicants are required to submit a Scope of Work (Attachment 4) for their project that meets the project requirements outlined in the Solicitation Manual. |
| 2 | **Can the CEC share more details behind V2G inclusion in Group 1? Are there specific types of distribution constraints that you see V2G being used to address? V2G could alleviate stress on a specific substation (compared to a local transformer or feeder), but not sure how an applicant would identify such a location ahead of this grant application.** | For Group 1, vehicle-to-building (V2B) and/or vehicle-to-grid (V2G) projects could reduce peak load, increase the effective capacity of the distribution grid by using energy from the electric vehicle to power home or local (neighboring) loads, regulate voltage levels especially in areas with high levels of connected solar photovoltaics, or provide other benefits. Applicants are encouraged to engage relevant stakeholders (utilities, grid operators, regulators, energy consultants, etc.) knowledgeable about locations facing grid constraints or prone to outages. |
| 3 | **Group 1, would the equipment used require UL 1741-SB certification? If so, could project funds be used for certification?** | Technology developed in Group 1 is not required to be UL 1741-SB certified. Technology development and testing costs associated with product readiness for relevant certifications are eligible expenses under this solicitation. The direct costs for the certification would not be eligible expenses. |
| 4 | **Can multiple properties [or demonstration sites] be included in the same application for a Group 1 application?** | Yes, a project can demonstrate or deploy a developed technology at multiple sites. |
| 5 | **For Group 1, how does “mitigating a distribution upgrade” need to be determined? Does the project need to have an interconnection application submitted that has gone through utility engineering review with an upgrade need and cost specifically identified?** | Group 1 projects are required to demonstrate technologies that beneficially and dynamically adjust the charging load limit, time, and rate based on distribution grid conditions while meeting customer driving needs. Group 1 projects are not required to defer a distribution upgrade. However, proposals should describe the technology’s ability to increase utilization of existing grid infrastructure and lower customer and ratepayer costs at scale, which may include avoided costs of distribution upgrades. |
| 6 | **Are school district fleets eligible project participants and site hosts for Group 1 under this solicitation?** | Yes, school district fleets are eligible project participants and site hosts for Group 1 and are considered a commercial customer. |
| 7 | **Does CEC have non-wires alternatives methodology which may be appropriate for this funding opportunity?** | This solicitation does not require use of a specific non-wires methodology to quantify the expected value of grid upgrade deferrals for a particular innovation. Proposed projects will be evaluated based on impacts and benefits to California Investor Owned Utilities (IOU) ratepayers and should state the timeframe, assumptions with sources, and calculations for the estimated benefits, and explain their reasonableness. Although not required, applicants are encouraged to leverage resources such as the CPUC Avoided Cost Calculator, which could be useful to estimate avoided distribution capacity costs. |
| 8 | **[Bidirectional EVSE] require homeowners to own bidirectional-capable EVs, and it would be difficult for these EV owners to all be in the same transformer service area. Does the CEC have recommendations on [V2G projects for Group 1 given this challenge]?** | Projects may demonstrate dynamic management of V2B and/or V2G discharge in response to distribution grid conditions, but this is not a requirement of Group 1. Addendum 2 has revised the Solicitation Manual (Section I.C) to include the following, “Projects that integrate V2B/V2G management capabilities can decide the number of bidirectional-capable electric vehicles to include in the demonstration fleet and are not limited to a bidirectional-only demonstration fleet.” |
| 9 | **Can you please confirm that Group 1 does NOT need to provide backup power or resilience during an outage? Does the control need to be locally implemented or certified as a Power Control System (PCS)?** | Technologies developed under Group 1 do not need to provide backup power or resilience during an outage. Group 1 projects may optionally demonstrate V2B/V2G discharge in response to distribution grid conditions.  Technology development and testing costs associated with product readiness for relevant certifications are eligible expenses under this solicitation. While direct costs for certification cannot be paid for with CEC funds, these costs could be paid for using match share funds. |
| 10 | **Do ALL demonstrations need to be paired up on the same distribution transformer? For example, if you have let's say 6 deployments with 3 pairs that are on the same distribution transformer and then you have another 40 sites scattered throughout the state of CA in IOU territories, is that allowed? Or do ALL demonstration need to be paired up on the same transformer?** | The Solicitation Manual states that Group 1 single-family residential demonstrations must include multiple customers that share utilization of common distribution grid components such as a distribution transformer. In the proposed example, this requirement is met. It will be up to the applicant to justify how additional demonstrations that exceed this requirement meet the needs and goals of Group 1. |
| 11 | **Can the CEC provide more guidance on the “distribution upgrade” requirement and what this consists of?** | Group 1 projects are required to demonstrate technologies that beneficially and dynamically adjust the charging load limit, time, and rate based on distribution grid conditions while meeting customer driving needs. Group 1 projects are not required to defer a distribution upgrade. However, proposals should describe the technology’s ability to increase utilization of existing grid infrastructure and lower customer and ratepayer costs at scale, which may include avoided costs of distribution upgrades. |
| 12 | **The Solicitation Manual specifies that DC hubs should use a medium voltage converter to achieve higher efficiencies in AC-DC conversion. What is the voltage for a medium voltage converter?** | The example provided in the Solicitation Manual for Group 2 projects considers a medium voltage converter connected to utility distribution (utility distribution voltages may vary between 4 kV and 35 kV). |
| 13 | **Do the Group 2 chargers need to be publicly available and capable of receiving payment?** | There is no requirement for the Group 2 electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) to be publicly available and capable of receiving payment. If the proposal includes publicly available EVSE capable of receiving payment, EVSE must be certified through the California Type Evaluation Program (CTEP) and support minimum payment methods as required by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) EVSE Standards. |
| 14 | **Can you give an example of "customer segment being represented" required in Group 2 [reference to pre-app slide 20]?** | Group 2 projects must conduct a real-world demonstration/deployment with a commercial customer. Potential customer segments include, but are not limited to, large public light-duty charging stations, depot charging for fleets, and public truck charging stations. |
| 15 | **For Group 2, what is it meant by the purpose to prefer technology that takes up a smaller footprint?** | Innovative high-power charging station designs incorporating DC-hub architectures as described in Group 2 can reduce the need for redundant power conversion equipment (for example, multiple AC/DC inverters) and reduce the physical footprint required for this equipment. A smaller footprint can contribute to benefits such as quicker installation and commissioning and more efficient land use. |
| 16 | **For Group 2, what are the assumptions that lead to having a 1 MW charging capacity for the site? is this based on average consumption or peak demand? If the latter, what are the assumptions for the charging profile?** | The 1 MW charging capacity is the nameplate capacity of the charging site (or sum of the maximum rated output capacity of all the chargers involved in the demonstration/deployment at the site). This minimum 1 MW charging capacity requirement is intended to ensure the developed solution is applicable to higher-power charging applications. |
| 17 | **For Group 2, is it feasible to conduct a preliminary demonstration of the technology with reduced power requirements, using it as a foundational step (that will meet the project budget), towards a larger-scale project that ultimately meets the 1MW criteria?** | Group 2 projects may conduct a preliminary demonstration with reduced power during the project term. However, the project still must complete a demonstration that meets the 1 MW requirement. |
| 18 | **For Group 3, do any chargers need to meet the technical requirements for public stations? Specifically, the credit card reader requirement?** | Group 3 project demonstrations/deployments do not need to take place at a public station, although that is an option. Group 3 project demonstrations/deployments that involve of public access EVSE(s) must be certified through the California Type Evaluation Program (CTEP) and support minimum payment methods as required by the CARB EVSE Standards. |
| 19 | **It is stated in the Solicitation Manual [under Group 3], “technologies that also integrate with DERs and/or load management systems are highly encouraged,” under Project Focus (section I.C). Does an applicant project score more points by including a DER?** | There are no explicit bonus points in the Scoring Criteria (Section IV.F.) for technologies integrating with distributed energy resources (DERs) and/or load management systems for Group 3 projects; however, projects will be evaluated holistically, and inclusion of DER integration and/or load management systems could strengthen an application. Applicants are encouraged to describe the rationale, advantages, and benefits for including DER integration and/or load management systems in their project. |
| 20 | **For Group 3, is there a target charger configuration (number of chargers, peak power for each charger) for such a charging site?** | There are no charger quantity or peak power requirements for Group 3. Applicants are required to choose a use case that would benefit from the proposed opportunity charging solution. The solution should meet the charging needs of that use case. |
| 21 | **For Group 3, what is the expected utilization for the charging site?** | Utilization will depend on the use case. Projects are required to collect enough data during charging sessions to demonstrate technology benefits. |
| 22 | **For Group 3, is there a guideline for the purpose of the charging site? Is it public charging/fleet depot/other? Is it intended for cars (for example, passenger cars, vans, heavy-duty trucks, buses, etc.)?** | This solicitation is open to all PEV types and classes. Group 3 projects must develop and demonstrate innovative opportunity charging solutions to enable shifting of PEV charging loads and encourage PEV adoption for challenging duty cycles. Applicants are required to describe a use case(s) that would benefit from the proposed opportunity charging solution (for example, public transit, port drayage, construction equipment, ridesharing), and then demonstrate with that use case(s) during the project term. |
| 23 | **Can the CEC clarify if battery swapping is eligible as electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE)?** | Battery swapping does not fall under conventional AC and DC EVSE. Some minimum technical requirements outlined in Project Focus (Section I.C) may not apply to battery swapping. All electric vehicle charging infrastructure funded and authorized under this solicitation, including conventional EVSE and innovative charging stations, must be installed by someone with an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP) certification. |
| 24 | **Are battery swapping stations servicing only commercial fleets subject to the requirements for EVITP-certified installations?** | This solicitation’s EVITP certification requirement applies to all electric vehicle charging infrastructure and equipment located on the customer side of the electrical meter, including battery swapping stations servicing only commercial fleets. |
| 25 | **We want to confirm, that as Battery Swapping as a technology is not widely implemented in the US, the EVITP certification does not cover battery swapping. Can the CEC provide guidance on the AB 841 requirement regarding this information?** | This solicitation’s EVITP certification requirement applies to all electric vehicle charging infrastructure and equipment located on the customer side of the electrical meter, including battery swapping stations.  AB 841 (Ting, 2020) added Public Utilities Code section 740.20, which requires all electrical vehicle charging infrastructure funded or authorized, in whole or in part, by the CEC to be installed by someone with an EVITP certification beginning on or after January 1, 2022, subject to certain exceptions included under Project Focus (Section I.C of the Solicitation Manual). |
| 26 | **Are companies already at TRL 7 eligible to apply for this opportunity under Group 3?** | Projects in Group 3 are required to advance technologies from TRL 5-6 to TRL 7-8 through demonstrations and deployments in real-world conditions. Proposed projects already at TRL 7 may not score as high based on limited technology readiness advancement and not meeting the intent of targeted baseline technology readiness level. |
| 27 | **[For Group 3], under Project Narrative [requirements], bullet two, please go into further detail regarding an appropriate response to “system efficiency” would look like. [Question if referring to content in Solicitation Manual].** | System efficiency should account for any predicted energy loss of the charging solution and should be reported at both the complete system and component levels, as applicable. An example could be AC-DC charging efficiency measuring energy loss during the conversion of AC power from the grid to DC power for the EV battery. Another example could be roundtrip efficiency measuring energy loss during export from the EV battery if the charging solution has bidirectional capability. |
| 28 | **[For Group 3], under Project Narrative [requirements], “Describe any pre-demonstration testing and validation of the proposed solution completed to date and proposed to complete through the project.” Could this consist of similar technologies or business models being used outside of California or outside of the US? [Question is referring to content in the Solicitation Manual].** | Applicants are required to describe any pre-demonstration testing and validation that was completed to get the proposed technology to TRL 5-6. This may include work completed outside of California. |
| 29 | **For Group 3, is there a guideline/target to the grid connection to be used for such site?** | Applications should discuss the degree to which the proposed work is technically feasible and achievable within the proposed Project Schedule and the key activities schedule, considering expected timelines for achieving grid connection. |
| 30 | **For Group 3, is there a guideline for expected/forecasted sites to be built based on the demonstrated innovation?** | Applications should discuss the degree to which the proposed work is technically feasible and achievable within the proposed Project Schedule and the key activities schedule, considering expected timelines for demonstration/deployment site construction activities. |
| 31 | **If a given technology may be applicable in both Group 1 and Group 3, what advice would you give on how to determine which would be better?** | Applicants should review the requirements for each Group in the Project Focus (Section I.C) to determine which Group best aligns with their proposed project and technology.  Applicants may submit multiple applications, though each application must address only one of the project groups identified. |
| 32 | **Does the [developed technology under] Group 1 and Group 3 need to be demonstrated onsite?** | Yes, all projects are required to advance technologies and demonstrate in real-world conditions. |
| 33 | **Are there any minimum requirements for the size or scale of technology deployments for Groups 1, 2, or 3 projects (other than the 1 MW charging capacity requirement for Group 2)? For example, minimum number of electric vehicle chargers, trucks, buses, cars, etc. that must be installed or deployed?** | No, there are no minimum requirements for the size or scale of technology deployments as it relates to the minimum number of electric vehicle chargers, trucks, buses, cars, etc. that must be installed or deployed for Group 1, 2, or 3 projects. Applicants are encouraged to propose demonstrations/deployments of a size or scale that will sufficiently advance the technology’s TRL and increase adoption in California. |
| 34 | **Can V2G be considered in Group 3? What is the difference and why would one want to submit this concept in Group 1 versus 2?** | Both Group 2 and Group 3 encourage projects that integrate with distributed energy resources, which may include V2G-enabled electric vehicles.  Applicants should review Section I.C. Project Focus where Group requirements are listed to determine which Group their proposed technology and project best responds to. |
| 35 | **What are the minimum technical requirements for EVSE, including ISO 15118-readiness and CCS-1?** | Addendum 2 has revised the Solicitation Manual (Section I.C) to include minimum technical requirements that apply to conventional EVSE, including CCS/J1772, ISO 15118 ready, and OCPP. Projects should develop or incorporate interoperable hardware and software products that will support CEC’s vision of a future in which any driver with any PEV can easily charge at any charger on any network, consistent with CEC’s Statement on Charging Interoperability.  The exception to this requirement is innovative charging solutions where standards may not be applicable or are currently in development.  All applicants are required to describe standards and protocols used in the Project Narrative (Attachment 3). |
| 36 | **Are bidirectional DC CHAdeMO chargers eligible for funding?** | Addendum 2 has revised the Solicitation Manual (Section I.C) to include minimum technical requirements for conventional EVSE, including CCS/J1772, ISO 15118 ready, and OCPP. DC EVSE shall include, at minimum, a J1772/CCS1 connector. EVSE stations may exceed these requirements, for example by supporting additional connector types. Projects should develop or incorporate interoperable hardware and software products that will support CEC’s vision of a future in which any driver with any PEV can easily charge at any charger on any network, consistent with CEC’s Statement on Charging Interoperability. |
| 37 | **What is the technology readiness requirement for EVSE?** | Technology readiness levels (TRLs) are a method for estimating the maturity of technologies during the acquisition phase of a program. The TRL requirement of TRL 5-6 to TRL 7-8 (unless otherwise noted in the Solicitation Manual) applies to the core technology innovation under each group. Depending on the project, the core technology innovation may or may not be the EVSE itself. |
| 38 | **Is a workplace included in your definition of commercial sites?** | Workplaces are considered commercial sites. |
| 39 | **Do project requirements include full compliance with CPUC Rule 21? Will CEC support a justified waiver of Rule 21 compliance if the objectives to modernize interconnection processes are defined as part of the deliverables?** | Addendum 2 has revised the Solicitation Manual (Section I.C) to include technical requirements of bidirectional EVSE, including addressing Rule 21 compliance. If the proposed technology has power export capability and the applicant would like to demonstrate this capability during the demonstration/deployment period, the technology must be compliant with Rule 21 as written. Exceptions to this are if the project is exempt from certain Rule 21 requirements (for example, if a temporary pathway is offered by the utility) or if the project is demonstrating non-grid interactive technologies for which Rule 21 is inapplicable. |
| 40 | **Are there bonus points associated with including V2G?** | There are no explicit bonus points in the Scoring Criteria (Section IV.F) associated with including V2G for a project. Projects will be evaluated holistically, and inclusion of V2G could strengthen an application by providing additional benefits. Applicants are encouraged to articulate the rationale and advantages for including V2G in their project. |
| 41 | **Do schools count as commercial customers?** | Yes, schools are considered commercial customers. |
| 42 | **Can the CEC go into more detail on their technology readiness requirement and what this means for the applicant?** | As indicated in Key Words/Terms section of the Solicitation Manual, technology readiness levels are a method for estimating the maturity of technologies during the acquisition phase of a program. Definitions of TRL levels can be found at the U.S. Department of Energy website: “[Technology Readiness Assessment Guide](https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-20-48g.pdf)”. |

# **Funding/Eligible Costs/Match Questions**

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| 43 | **What is the budget for each Group, and what is the expected number of awards for this funding opportunity?** | Please review Amount Available and Minimum/Maximum Funding Amounts (Section I.D.1 of the Solicitation Manual). About 2-3 awards for Group 1, 2-4 awards for Group 2, and 2-4 awards for Group 3 are anticipated. |
| 44 | **Can the CEC increase the funding level for Group 2?** | The funding level for Group 2 will not be increased. The funding amount is comparable to other grant awards in this space. Supplementing with match funds is encouraged if the maximum CEC award amount is not sufficient to cover an applicant’s project scope. |
| 45 | **What types of equipment and project costs are eligible for funding?** | Applicants should list all direct labor, fringe benefits, equipment, materials, travel, subrecipient and vendor costs, and indirect costs in the template budget (Attachment 6). Please review Section III.C.6 for more details on eligible costs and guidance on budget categories. All costs in the budget must be directly related to the project and necessary to accomplish tasks in the Scope of Work.  EPIC funds cannot be used to purchase or lease PEVs for the proposed project. Applicants may use match funds to purchase or lease PEVs (See Section I.K of the Solicitation Manual for more information on Match Funds). |
| 46 | **Are ‘soft’ costs like direct labor, outreach, and engagement considered eligible costs?** | Yes, eligible costs include all direct labor, outreach, and engagement directly related to the project and necessary to accomplish tasks in the Scope of Work. |
| 47 | **Will applicant-manufactured batteries for use in battery swapping stations be eligible for funding?** | CEC funds can be used to cover incremental costs associated with vehicle upgrades, including batteries suitable for swapping, needed to enable the project's core innovation and meet the solicitation requirements. |
| 48 | **Is there a restriction on using CEC funds to purchase charging equipment from a state outside of California?** | There is no restriction on using CEC funds to purchase charging equipment from an out-of-state entity; however, there is a preference for funds spent in California. Applicants are encouraged to review the Scoring Criteria (section IV.F) to see how funds spent in California affect application scoring. |
| 49 | **Can funding be used to purchase vehicles (for example, electric school buses) that will utilize the charging system?** | EPIC funds cannot be used to purchase or lease electric vehicles for the proposed project. Applicants may use match funds to purchase or lease electric vehicles. |
| 50 | **For vehicles being adapted for battery swapping technology, can the cost of purchase of the vehicle be separate from the cost of integration of modular battery and adaptor plate?** | Yes, the cost of the vehicle (not eligible for CEC funds) can be separate from the cost of integration of the modular battery and adaptor plate (eligible for CEC funds). |
| 51 | **Are manufacturing costs for battery swapping stations eligible for funding?** | Yes, manufacturing costs are eligible for funding. |
| 52 | **From an equity/CBO perspective, can you confirm that the primary “requirement” is partnering with a CBO? And if we go the extra step of locating the project in a disadvantaged community (DAC)/low-income community (LIC)/Tribal area, then the match requirement falls from 25% to 10%? Clarifying because on page 19 of the Solicitation Manual, it says that EPIC requires 25% of funding to be located in DACs plus additional 10% in LICs.** | All projects are required to partner with at least one community-based organization (CBO). The project narrative (Attachment 2) must (1) identify the CBO(s), and (2) describe their role in the project and the benefits their partnership will bring. The project budget (Attachment 6) should include CBO(s) participation in the project.  Section D.2 of the Solicitation Manual describes the match funding requirement. The match funding requirement is reduced to at least 10% of the requested CEC funds for projects located in and benefiting a California Native American Tribe, Disadvantaged Community, and/or Low Income Community.  The question also refers to, “at least 25% of available Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) technology demonstration and deployment funding must be allocated to project sites located in, and benefiting, disadvantaged communities; and an additional minimum 10% of funds must be allocated to projects sites located in and benefiting low-income communities,” under section I.J.1 of the Solicitation Manual. The 25% and 10% funding requirement applies to the EPIC program as a whole and is unrelated to the match funding requirement for this solicitation. |
| 53 | **[In the Solicitation Manual], Section K, “[Match funds do not include] the cost or value of the project work site, or the cost or value of structures or other improvements affixed to the project work site permanently or for an indefinite period of time (for example, photovoltaic systems).” Here, “cost or value of the project work site” is clearly stated, however, in the next paragraph in the “In-Kind” Match section, “donated space, existing equipment, existing supplies, services provided by a third-party” are clearly listed as applicable in-kind match contributions. Can you clarify this?** | Match funding includes cash or in-kind (non-cash) contributions that will be used for the purpose of the project within the agreement term.  “Cash” match means funds that are in the grant recipient’s possession or proposed by a match partner and clearly identified in a support letter, and are reserved for the proposed project, meaning that they have not been committed for use or pledged as match for any other project. This could include funds reserved for costs to lease a project site within the agreement term.  “In-kind” match can be in the form of goods or services that are not reimbursed with CEC funds such as donated space or project work site. The value of in-kind match is based on the fair market value of the goods and services provided at the time it is claimed as match. |
| 54 | **Can the CEC clarify their “Match” requirement. For example, if a $2,000,000 grant is requested from the CEC for the project, will that mean a subsequent $500,000 will need to be matched, making it a $2,500,000 project budget?** | Match funding is required in the amount of at least 25% of the requested CEC funds. If $2,000,000 is requested from the CEC, the applicant will need to commit $500,000 in match for a total project budget of $2,500,000.  The match funding requirement is reduced to at least 10% of the requested CEC funds for projects located in and benefiting a California Native American Tribe, Disadvantaged Community, and/or Low Income Community. In this case, if $2,000,000 is requested from the CEC, the applicant will need to commit $200,000 in match for a total project budget of $2,200,000. |
| 55 | **What is the minimum spending percentage in California required for grant eligibility? What is its impact in the overall scoring?** | There is no minimum requirement for grant eligibility related to the percentage of CEC funds spent in California. Projects that maximize the spending of CEC funds in California will receive points as indicated in the table below from Section IV.F. Scoring Criterion 6. CEC Funds Spent in California in the Solicitation Manual:  Table describing percentage of funds spent in California vs total funds requested and percentage of possible points. |
| 56 | **Are commercially available EVSE eligible for funding?** | Commercially available EVSE is eligible for funding. |
| 57 | **Are R&D efforts for new customer adoption eligible for funding? If a new vehicle model wishes to adopt battery swapping, can costs such as viability studies, integration testing, and product certification be included?** | R&D efforts for new customer adoption is eligible for funding if it is necessary to meet the requirements of the solicitation. For example, a battery swapping technology developed under Group 3 must demonstrate with a use case (for example, public transit, port drayage, construction equipment, ridesharing) that would benefit from the proposed opportunity charging solution. If that use case requires R&D efforts for adoption, these expenses can be added to the budget with justification included in the project narrative. R&D efforts for electric vehicle models that have no tie to the demonstration/deployment will not be eligible for funding. |
| 58 | **For Group 1, what are eligible funding categories? Are EVSE and Make Ready/site preparation included?** | EVSE and make ready/site preparation costs are eligible for funding. All costs in the budget must be directly related to the project and necessary to accomplish tasks in the Scope of Work. |
| 59 | **Are products manufactured as part of a separate CEC-funded project eligible for funding under this solicitation?** | CEC-funded equipment from another project can be utilized in this project but cannot be additionally funded by the CEC or qualify as match. “Match funds” do not include CEC awards, EPIC funds received from other sources, future/contingent awards from other entities (public or private). Please see Section I.K. Match Funding in the Solicitation Manual for additional details. |
| 60 | **Can [a recipient] use CEC funds for workforce development and other community-based programs alongside the charging solutions?** | Yes. It is a requirement of all groups to develop an equitable workforce development plan and partner with a CBO. These efforts should be reflected in the project budget. |
| 61 | **Battery swapping stations will be manufactured in California utilizing components sourced both locally and internationally. An EV charger manufactured in California would be “made in California” regardless of the supply chain. Can we apply this same logic to battery swapping stations?** | To qualify material and equipment purchases as “Funds Spent in California,” the business transaction must be entered into with a business located in California.  See Section I.L for additional details and a related example: “CEC funds will be spent on temperature sensors. The temperature sensors are manufactured in Washington. The grant recipient orders the temperature sensors directly from a CA based supply house. The invoice shows that the transaction occurred with the CA based supply house. This transaction is eligible and can be counted as funds spent in CA.” |
| 62 | **We have read Section L, "Funds Spent in California." Is there a CEC resource we could contact to address specific examples of prior to submitting our application?** | To qualify a purchase for “Funds Spent in California,” the business transaction must be entered into with a business located in California. See Section I.L. Grant recipients will document their funds spent in California on the basis of transactions with businesses located in California. If a company is registered with the California Secretary of State and pays California taxes, it is interpreted to be “a business located in California.”  Applicants can send questions that address an ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other possible errors in the solicitation to the Commission Agreement Officer, [Natalie.Johnson@energy.ca.gov](mailto:Natalie.Johnson@energy.ca.gov), any time prior to the application deadline. If questions are outside this scope, applicants can contact the [Grants Ombudsman](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/grants-ombudsman). |
| 63 | **[The Solicitation Manual] states that, “the budget must NOT identify that CEC funds will be spent outside of the United States or for out-of-country travel.” This is under the heading of “Russia Sanctions.” Is this rule specific to Russia? Would a recipient be barred from purchasing components abroad?** | This rule is not specific to Russia.  Section III.C.6 of the Solicitation Manual states that the budget must NOT identify that CEC funds will be spent outside of the United States or for out-of-country travel. However, match funds may cover these costs if there are no legal restrictions. |
| 64 | **Can the CEC clarify when and how the funding will be released for successful applicants? Will the funds be released at one single time? Regarding the operations and implementation of the project, it is reasonable to expect that there will be unforeseen expenses which arise. It is reasonable to expect that these expenses were not budgeted for. Will CEC funds be allowed to be in a liquid manner, meaning that the funds will be able to be spent without the CEC’s pre-approved budget?** | Applicants should refer to the relevant EPIC Grant terms and conditions (located at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources> under Research and Development Funding Information) for details on how CEC funds will be paid to successful applicants (grant recipients).  The recipient will invoice periodically, according to expenses listed in the agreement budget, and they will be reimbursed for those expenses at the time of invoice submission.  The CEC only reimburses for expenses listed in the agreement budget. The recipient and commission agreement manager will meet monthly to discuss unforeseen expenses. If these expenses are reasonable and approved, a budget reallocation can take place. |
| 65 | **Are there any restrictions on stacking CEC funding with EPA, utility make ready, or other funding sources?** | Staff assumes “stacking” means using other funding sources as match. “Match Funds” cannot include CEC awards, EPIC funds received from other sources, or future/contingent awards from other entities (public or private). Please review Section I.K. Match Funding for additional details. |
| 66 | **It was mentioned funding cannot be spent until signed contract with CEC, even the match funding. What is included in this spending amount? Can the site be purchased? Any long-lead equipment?** | Section III.C. Application Content of the Solicitation Manual states that “all project expenditures (match share and reimbursable) must be made within the Anticipated Agreement Start and End dates listed in the “Key Activities Schedule” of this Solicitation Manual. Match share requirements are discussed in Part I.D and I.K of this solicitation.” Purchases made before a grant agreement is signed cannot be counted toward match share or reimbursed with CEC funds. |
| 67 | **Will there be funding for IOU support of this grant solicitation?** | Yes, IOUs could apply to this GFO as a prime. They may also participate as project partners providing support in obtaining sites, accessing meter data, providing match funds, facilitating CPUC approvals, and contributing technical and program expertise. |

# **General Project Requirements/Miscellaneous Questions**

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| 68 | **Where can the pre-application presentation slides, recording, and attendee list be found?** | All pre-application workshop materials can be found on the [GFO-23-306 webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-01/gfo-23-306-grid-supportive-transportation-electrification). |
| 69 | **Are applicants considered for one group only, or can they qualify for multiple project groups?** | Applicants may submit multiple applications, though each application must address only one of the project groups. If an applicant submits multiple applications that address the same project group, each application must be for a distinct project (that is, no overlap with respect to the technical tasks described in the Scope of Work). |
| 70 | **Are applicants required to be located in California?** | Applicants are not required to be located in California. However, the applicant will need to ensure that the proposed project (1) benefits California electricity ratepayers; and (2) leads to technological advancement and breakthroughs to overcome the barriers that prevent the achievement of the California’s statutory energy goals, as required under Section II. B. 2. |
| 71 | **Is it required to partner with a California company to apply and run a project?** | The prime or other project partners do not have to be located in California. Applicants are encouraged to review the Scoring Criteria (section IV.F) to see how funds spent in California affects application scoring.  However, projects are required to partner with at least one CBO. A CBO must have deployed projects and/or outreach efforts within the region (for example, air basin or county) of the proposed disadvantaged or low-income community or similar community. |
| 72 | **Would applicants be deemed ineligible if they apply without a partner(s)?** | Yes. Projects are required to partner with at least one CBO. Beyond a CBO, projects are encouraged to engage broad project partners, but this is not a requirement. |
| 73 | **Can you expand on "this solicitation is open to all public and private entities with the exception of local publicly owned electric utilities?" Can you provide rationale behind excluding local publicly owned electric utilities [reference to pre-app slide 24]?** | The Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) program is funded by an electricity ratepayer surcharge established by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in December 2011. Developed technologies must benefit electricity ratepayers of California’s three largest investor-owned electric utilities (IOUs) (i.e., Pacific Gas and Electric Co., San Diego Gas and Electric Co., and Southern California Edison Co). The EPIC program is administered by the CEC and the IOUs. In accordance with CPUC Decision 12-05-037, EPIC funds administered by the CEC may not be used for any purposes associated with local publicly owned electric utility activities. |
| 74 | **Is it true an entity can only be prime for one proposal/group but can be a subcontractor for unlimited number of proposals?** | Applicants may submit multiple applications, though each application must address only one of the project groups. If an applicant submits multiple applications that address the same project group, each application must be for a distinct project (that is, no overlap with respect to the technical tasks described in the Scope of Work).  There is no restriction on the number of applications for which an entity can serve as a subcontractor. |
| 75 | **Is there any reason a Community Choice Aggregator would be ineligible as a partner? Could they be considered a CBO?** | A project partner is a person or entity that contributes financially or otherwise to the project (e.g., match funding, provision of a test, demonstration or deployment site), and does not receive CEC funds.  All CBOs must meet the requirements outlined in Section I.B. These include: (1) has deployed projects and/or outreach efforts within the region (for example, air basin or county) of the proposed disadvantaged or low-income community or similar community; (2) has an official mission and vision statements that expressly identifies serving disadvantaged and/or low-income communities; and (3) currently employs staff member(s) who specialized in and are dedicated to – diversity, or equity, or inclusion, or is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.  Nothing, in this solicitation, prevents a Community Choice Agreement from being eligible as a partner. Consequently, if a Community Choice Aggregator meets the definition of Project Partner or CBO, then it could qualify as such. |
| 76 | **Does “located in” [in reference to the match reduction qualification requirement] mean R&D, deployment, either, or both?** | The question is referring to, “The match funding requirement is reduced to at least 10% of the requested CEC funds for projects located in and benefiting a California Native American Tribe, Disadvantaged Community, and/or Low Income Community,” under Match Funding Requirement (Section I.D.2). Addendum 2 has revised the Solicitation Manual (Section I.D.2) to clarify that the demonstration/deployment site must be located in these communities to qualify for match reduction. |
| 77 | **Can we finalize the cooperation with the related parties (CBO and contractor with EVITP certification), after the proposal submission but before the anticipated CEC business meeting, or is it a pre-requisite for application submission?** | Applicants are required to identify a CBO and describe their role in the project and the benefits their partnership will bring in the Project Narrative (Attachment 2).  Partnership with contractors with EVITP certification can be finalized during agreement development (the period after awarded projects are announced and before the CEC business meeting). |
| 78 | **From an equity/CBO perspective, can you confirm that the primary “requirement” is partnering with a CBO? And if we go the extra step of locating the project in a DAC/LIC/Tribal area, then the match requirement falls from 25% to 10%?** | Partnering with a CBO is a requirement for all groups.  If the project is located in and benefiting a DAC/LIC/Tribe, the match requirement is reduced from 25% to 10%. |
| 79 | **Is it possible to submit a proposal with a different/shorter schedule (for example, demonstrating the capability before October 2027). If yes, is it expected to be considered an advantage to this proposal?** | Yes, applicants can propose a shorter project term. Proposals will be evaluated based on scoring criteria described in Section IV.F. The degree to which the proposed work is technically feasible and achievable within the proposed Project Schedule will be considered in Scoring Criterion 2. Technical Approach. CEC cannot advise on whether a shorter schedule will be advantageous or not for any particular proposal. |
| 80 | **Is the Bay Area Community Colleges Advanced Manufacturing Program eligible as a Community Based Organization?** | For the purposes of this solicitation, the definition of a CBO is outlined in Section I.B. Key Words/Terms in the Solicitation Manual. A CBO is a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that: (1) has deployed projects and/or outreach efforts within the region (for example, air basin or county) of the proposed disadvantaged or low-income community or similar community; (2) has an official mission and vision statements that expressly identifies serving disadvantaged and/or low-income communities; and (3) currently employs staff member(s) who specialized in and are dedicated to – diversity, or equity, or inclusion, or is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. If the Bay Area Community Colleges Advanced Manufacturing Program fits this definition, it could qualify as a CBO. |
| 81 | **Are all commitment and support letters limited to two pages per letter or is two pages the total amount allowed for all commitment and support letters?** | Commitment and support letters are limited to two pages per letter, excluding the cover page. |
| 82 | **Can you provide more information on whether Past Projects Information (Attachment 8) is only for previous agreements with the CEC or if the CEC is seeking information on relevant projects the applicants have conducted?** | The Past Projects Information (Attachment 8) requires applicants to list past agreements with the CEC; list past agreements with other entities (that is, other public agencies, California utilities, Department of Energy, or other agreements that included public funding); describe in detail relevant past projects; and list recent publications. |
| 83 | **If a proposed project will deploy a software technology over a broader distribution-constrained geographic area that contains qualified DAC or LIC areas but also non-DAC and non-LIC areas, would this project qualify for the 10% match instead of the 25% match?** | Yes, a project with multiple demonstration/deployment sites in both qualified disadvantaged, low-income, and/or tribal areas and sites outside of these areas will qualify for the match reduction. |
| 84 | **Can an applicant submit two applications that propose to demonstrate the same technologies and general project design, but in different utility service territories and with different project partners? Would this difference in territory and partners constitute enough of a project distinction to be eligible as separate applications?** | Applicants may submit multiple applications, though each application must address only one of the project groups. If an applicant submits multiple applications that address the same project group, each application must be for a distinct project (that is, no overlap with respect to the technical tasks described in the Scope of Work).  Applicants cannot submit multiple applications if the service territory and project partners are different, but the technical tasks in the SOW remain the same. An alternative approach would be to submit one application where the technology is demonstrated at multiple sites (can be different service territories) with different project partners. |
| 85 | **How does the role of a CCA differ from that of an IOU under the context of this solicitation?** | Electric investor-owned utilities (IOUs) in California include Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Southern California Electric (SCE), and San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E). The Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) program is funded by ratepayers of these utilities, which is why the projects funded under this solicitation must benefit these ratepayers.  Community Choice Aggregations (CCAs) are public entities formed by local communities and available within the service territories of IOUs. Customers using a CCA served by an IOU are still considered to be in IOU territory. |
| 86 | **Are there requirements for the project to take place in specific IOU service territories?** | Yes, the demonstration/deployment site(s) must be located in a California IOU service territory (i.e., PG&E, SDG&E, or SCE). |
| 87 | **Can the CEC provide more details about the “Technical Advisory Committee” in the Scope of Work? How many members are expected to be on the committee? Can committee members be employees of the Applicant? Are committee members expected to be compensated for their participation? Is it acceptable for committee members to be compensated using CEC funds?** | The number and composition of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members will vary depending on interest, availability, and need for the particular project. The List of Potential TAC Members is prepared by the recipient before the Kick-off Meeting and approved by the CEC Agreement Manager. TAC members can include employees of the recipient and project partners. The CEC Agreement Manager will work with grant recipients to build a diverse TAC composed of qualified professionals. There are no restrictions for compensating TAC members with CEC funds, but TAC members are not usually compensated and are asked to volunteer their time to attend TAC meetings and comment on certain deliverables including the Performance Metrics Summary, Project Case Study Plan, and Final Report. |
| 88 | **Does a customer using a CCA served by an IOU still meet the requirement of an IOU customer?** | Yes, customers using a CCA served by an IOU are still considered to be in IOU territory, as the IOU remains responsible for delivery of electricity and maintenance of infrastructure. |
| 89 | **Was the [pre-application workshop] CBO slide listing requirements or part of the scoring methodology? What is defined as community engagement?** | The pre-application CBO slide (slide #40) listed the requirements that need to be met for an organization to qualify as a CBO. These include: (1) has deployed projects and/or outreach efforts within the region (for example, air basin or county) of the proposed disadvantaged or low-income community or similar community; (2) has an official mission and vision statements that expressly identifies serving disadvantaged and/or low-income communities; and (3) currently employs staff member(s) who specialized in and are dedicated to – diversity, or equity, or inclusion, or is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.  Community engagement includes soliciting and considering community input in the design of a project, engaging the impacted community in project implementation, disseminating educational materials and career information to best support community understanding and engagement as applicable. Please review scoring criterion 8.2, Community Engagement Efforts. |
| 90 | **CEC states that “a minimum of 5 percent of CEC funds requested should go towards technology transfer activities.” What exactly does this mean?** | There is a mandatory task in the Scope of Work Template (Attachment 4) titled Technology/Knowledge Transfer Activities. The goal of this task is to ensure the technological learnings resulted from the project demonstration(s)/deployment(s) are captured and disseminated to the range of professions that will be responsible for future deployments of this technology or similar technologies. A minimum of 5% of CEC funds should go toward the completion of this task. |
| 91 | **Can CEC provide clarity regarding how it defines “community input” under the “Community Engagement” portion of the scoring rubric? What type of entities does CEC define as “community” to meet the requirement?** | The “community” in the context of “community engagement” can include stakeholders who have an interest or are affected by the project (for example, local organizations, residents, businesses, and government). The public’s perspectives and concerns can also be taken into consideration during the engagement process to fully understand the impact of the project.  Community input can be solicited through public meetings/workshops, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and other means. Previous research that has already collected community input can also be leveraged. |
| 92 | **Can we make proposed projects part of larger projects outside the parameters of the solicitation?** | Applicants may propose a project that builds on an existing project outside the parameters of the solicitation. However, all labor and equipment expenses (including both CEC-funded and covered by match) have to go toward development and demonstration/deployment of the technology that meets all requirements of the solicitation. |
| 93 | **Section 1(g) and 2(i) both require “information described in Section I.C.” Do applicants have to provide the information described in Section I.C. twice?** | Question is referring to, “Provides information described in Section I.C,” under Scoring Criteria 1. Technical Merit and 2. Technical Approach. These scoring criteria will consider the proposal’s responsiveness to the requested information described in Section I.C. Project Focus as it relates to Technical Merit and Technical Approach.  The applicant can choose which project narrative section to place the requested information from Section I.C. Project Focus. Applicants do not need to provide this information twice. |
| 94 | **[For Group 3], under Project Narrative, “Describe how the site(s) was selected, if the site(s) is in a low-income and/or disadvantaged community, and any communication with the community to determine site needs.” Would this communication with the community need to go through the LI/DAC organization we partner with or does it need to occur through different methods?** | This section of the project narrative provides an opportunity for the applicant to share how they have incorporated community input and needs into the site selection for their proposed demonstration/deployment. Community input can be solicited through the CBO partner for the proposed project or through other means such as public meetings/workshops, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Previous research that has already collected community input can also be leveraged.  Please also review Scoring Criterion 8.2, Community Engagement Efforts. |
| 95 | **Can a local publicly owned utility be a project partner on a public or private entity’s application?** | A local publicly owned utility can be a project partner, but they cannot receive CEC funds. In accordance with CPUC Decision 12-05-037, [EPIC] funds administered by the CEC may not be used for any purposes associated with local publicly owned electric utility activities. |
| 96 | **Do project team members consist of all entities, partners, and sub-contractors who will be employed with and/or donating their services/labor to the project? Can you specify which project team members will need to provide their resumes?** | Yes, project team members consist of all subrecipients (and match fund partners) who will be employed with and/or donating their services/labor to the project.  Resumes are required for all key personnel, which are individuals that are critical to the project due to their experience, knowledge, and/or capabilities. This includes personnel employed by the applicant, a subrecipient, or sub-subrecipient (if applicable). |
| 97 | **Is the anticipated agreement end date fixed at 10/01/2027, or can the agreement term be extended?** | Section III.C. Application Content of the Solicitation Manual states that “All work must be scheduled for completion by the “Key Dates” section of this Solicitation Manual,” which includes the Anticipated Agreement End Date of 10/01/2027. The agreement term can be extended during agreement development or after the agreement is executed through an amendment as defined in the grant T&Cs. |
| 98 | **Within the 3 year performance period, are there time requirements on design, build, and operate? For example, does the charging infrastructure need to be operating for at least 12 months within the performance period, or some other duration?** | Addendum 2 has revised the Solicitation Manual (Section I.C) to include the following, “Demonstration or deployment length must be at minimum 6 months and meet all group data collection requirements.”  There are no other time requirements. Design and build lengths will depend on the applicant’s scope of work. |
| 99 | **What is the applicability of Section 2 in the Terms and Conditions if the grant is a commercial services award where adequate price competition was obtained?** | All sections in the Terms and Conditions apply. |