

Questions and Answers

GFO-23-403

Local Government Building Decarbonization Challenge

April 23, 2024

The following answers are based on California Energy Commission (CEC) staff's interpretation of the questions received for the Local Government Building Decarbonization Challenge (LGBDC) Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO), GFO-23-403.

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 advise as to whether a particular project is eligible for funding because not all application 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).

Pre-Application Workshop

Q1: Can we get a copy of the pre-application workshop recording?

A1: The pre-application workshop recording has been posted on the [GFO-23-403 Pre-Application Workshop webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2024-03/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-403-local-government-building) (https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2024-03/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-403-local-government-building) under "Event Recording". Please monitor the [GFO-23-403 solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) (https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) for the latest information.

Q2: Can we get a copy of the pre-application workshop presentation?

A2: The pre-application workshop presentation is available on the [GFO-23-403 solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) (https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge).

Q3: Is the attendee list for the pre-application workshop available to participants?

A3: The pre-application workshop attendee list is available on the [GFO-23-403 solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) (https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge).

Miscellaneous

Q4: How can we obtain a copy of the solicitation manual?

A4: The solicitation manual is available on the [GFO-23-403 solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge>).

Q5: Would someone from the CEC be available to provide a presentation about this solicitation to my organization?

A5: No. For transparency and fairness to all interested parties, potential applicants can only correspond with the assigned Commission Agreement Officer (CAO) during the solicitation process (Section I.K of the solicitation manual on page 10). Detailed information from the pre-application workshop is available in the event recording posted on the [GFO-23-403 Pre-Application Workshop webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2024-03/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-403-local-government-building) (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2024-03/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-403-local-government-building>).

Q6: Can we start work before September 2024?

A6: No. Selected awardees may not start work before there is an executed agreement with the CEC. After the solicitation process is complete and the Notice of Proposed Awards (NOPA) is posted, all awards will be taken to the August 2024 business meeting for approval. Following approval, it will take additional time to fully execute and sign the grant agreements. As a result, the anticipated start date for agreements funded by this solicitation is September 1, 2024.

Q7: Is this grant the same as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Community Change Grant?

A7: No. The United States Department of Energy's (DOE) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program was created by the Federal Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and expanded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). New funding was allocated to the program in 2021 under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), with the broad goals of reducing carbon emissions and energy use, improving energy efficiency, and increasing community investment and local workforce development. IIJA funding made available in 2021 under the EECBG (2021 EECBG) allocated funds directly to state and certain local jurisdictions that met program criteria. This solicitation is funded with 2021 EECBG funds.

Q8: Under Unallowable Costs for this solicitation, what does equipment include?

A8: Equipment is defined as items having a per unit cost of at least \$5,000 and a useful life of at least one (1) year. Equipment means any products, objects, machinery, apparatus, implements, or tools purchased, used, or constructed within the project, including those products, objects, machinery, apparatus, implements, or tools from which over thirty percent (30%) of the equipment is composed of materials purchased for the project. Items not meeting this definition are potentially allowable and can be included on the Materials & Misc. tab of the Budget Worksheet (Attachment 4).

Q9: The solicitation manual does not state that Administrative Costs are an allowable project cost, which is unusual considering the awardee's responsibility for administering the project. Can you please provide clarification on this matter?

A9: Administrative Costs are included as Allowable Project Costs in Section II.D on pages 21-22 of the solicitation manual.

Q10: What are the provisions for local governments hiring contractors for this program?

A10: Please see the contracting and procurement requirements for Subawards and Subcontracts entered into between a Subrecipient and Lower-Tier Subrecipients and Vendors, please see the Draft Standard Terms and Conditions (Attachment 7) and Draft EECBG Subaward Federal Terms and Conditions (Attachment 8) posted on the [GFO-23-403 solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge>). Please be aware that these are draft terms and conditions and may be modified to comply with federal requirements.

Q11: Where can I find more information about the eligible activities, background, and sunset date for this solicitation?

A11: The Project Requirements (Section II.C) on pages 14-20 of the solicitation manual includes detailed information about eligible project activities. The Background (Section I.B) information is on pages 5-6 of the solicitation manual. The Key Activities and Dates (Section I.C) are on page 7 of the solicitation manual. Additional information about the end date is also on page 32 of the solicitation manual, which states, "All work must be completed, and the final invoice submitted to the CEC by June 30, 2027."

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Q12: Who is eligible to apply for this solicitation?

A12: According to the GFO Applicant Requirements (Section II.A) on page 12 of the solicitation manual, “This is an open solicitation for California local government entities, which include the following:

- City governments and their departments.
- County governments and their departments.
- Organizations recognized as city or county governments such as joint power authorities and councils of governments.

A group of jurisdictions/agencies applying as a consortium, must identify a single jurisdiction or agency to serve as the primary Applicant.”

It is important to note that the maximum award amount of \$400,000 is per application, not per project partner (see Minimum and Maximum Award Amounts on page 8 of the solicitation manual in Section I.F).

According to the Application Content (Section III.D) on pages 30-35 of the solicitation manual, “Applicants must submit certification that they have authority to apply on behalf of their jurisdiction and that they are the sole entity applying on its behalf.”

In addition, according to the Maximum Number of Applications (Section I.G) also located on page 8 of the solicitation manual, applicants may only participate in or submit one (1) application under this solicitation. However, that single application may propose multiple project activities, but they must adhere to the requirements discussed in Section II.C on pages 14-20 of the solicitation manual.

Q13: Are towns eligible to apply for this solicitation?

A13: Yes. Towns, townships, and boroughs that are incorporated places will be treated as cities. The governments of these places have the functionality of city governments. Please see the answer to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply for this solicitation.

Q14: Can a state department apply for this solicitation?

A14: No. State departments are not eligible to apply. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply for this solicitation.

Q15: Would an individual company be eligible for this solicitation?

A15: No. Individual companies are not eligible to apply. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply for this solicitation.

Q16: Can a utility apply on behalf of a city or county government?

A16: No. Utilities are not eligible to apply. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply for this solicitation.

Q17: We are a city department. Can our department apply with its own project, or do we have to apply on behalf of the city as a whole?

A17: Individual city departments are not eligible to apply on their own unless granted authority by the city to be the sole entity applying on its behalf. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply.

Q18: Can local governments join to form a coalition and submit one (1) application?

A18: Local governments can form a coalition or partnership and submit one (1) application. However, a single eligible jurisdiction must be identified to serve as the primary applicant, which will be the Subrecipient of the grant award resulting from this solicitation. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply.

Q19: How will a coalition that includes EECBG and non-EECBG communities be considered for this solicitation?

A19: Local governments can form a coalition or partnership and submit one (1) application. However, a single eligible jurisdiction must be identified to serve as the primary applicant, which will be the Subrecipient of the grant award resulting from this solicitation. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply.

- **Funding Group 1** – If the primary applicant was not eligible for a direct 2021 EECBG allocation from DOE, they are eligible to apply for funds from the first category totaling \$2,713,380, referred to throughout the solicitation manual as Funding Group 1.
- **Funding Group 2** – If the primary applicant was eligible for a direct 2021 EECBG allocation from DOE, they are eligible to apply for funds from the remaining category totaling \$1,356,690, referred to throughout the solicitation as Funding Group 2.

Note that individual funding groups have different eligibility requirements. More information is available in Applicant Requirements (Section II.A) on page 12 of the solicitation manual.

Q20: Are Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) eligible to apply? If not, can they partner with a city or county for this solicitation?

Q20: Please see the answer to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply.

Q21: We have a joint powers agreement, not authority, to coordinate on climate action activities with incorporated jurisdictions within a small county government. Could the county submit a single application that would allow for the sharing of funds for project activities completed by the incorporated jurisdictions, but in coordination with the county? Or would each jurisdiction need to submit its own application to be eligible for funding?

A21: A joint powers agreement is a contract between two or more public agencies, such as a city, county, school district, or special district, which allows the agencies to cooperatively provide services or exercise shared powers outside each agency's normal jurisdiction. Unlike a joint powers authority, it is not an organization recognized as a city or county government.

Eligible local governments within the joint powers agreement can apply on their own. Otherwise, the jurisdictions within the joint powers agreement can submit one (1) application. However, a single eligible jurisdiction must be identified to serve as the primary applicant, which will be the Subrecipient of the grant award resulting from this solicitation. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply.

Q22: Is the maximum amount of \$400K for the entire application or each agency in a consortium depending on the project submitted?

A22: According to the Minimum and Maximum Award Amounts (Section I.F) on page 8 of the solicitation manual, the maximum award amount is \$400,000, while the minimum award amount is \$250,000. These maximum and minimum amounts are per application, not per project partner.

In addition, according to the Maximum Number of Applications (Section I.G) also on page 8 of the solicitation manual, applicants may only participate in or submit one (1) application under this solicitation. However, that single application may propose multiple project activities, but they must adhere to the requirements discussed in Section II.C on pages 14-20 of the solicitation manual.

Q23: Can I apply for this solicitation if my jurisdiction is not a low-income community (LIC)?

A23: Yes. Applicants are not required to be disadvantaged communities (DACs) or LICs. Please see the response to question 12 for more information about who is eligible to apply.

The LGBDC must comply with the Federal Justice 40 Initiative (Justice40), which means Subrecipients awarded grants resulting from this solicitation must provide information to support the CEC's Justice 40 reporting to the DOE.

When completing the Application Form (Attachment 1), applicants must follow the instructions and indicate the census tracts identified as priority populations.

During the scoring process, up to five (5) preference points will be awarded for projects located in and benefiting priority populations as indicated in the Evaluation Criteria (Section IV.E) on pages 42-45 of the solicitation manual.

Q24: Are there any bonus points allowed for county groups vs. city groups, or individual grants vs. regional grants in this solicitation?

A24: No. During the scoring process, up to five (5) preference points will be awarded for priority populations, and up to another five (5) preference points will be awarded for additional outreach. More information about the available preference points is in the Evaluation Criteria (Section IV.E) on pages 42-45 of the solicitation manual.

Project Eligibility Requirements

Q25: What kind of projects are eligible for this solicitation?

A25: Due to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements of the DOE 2021 EECBG funds, project activities funded by this solicitation cannot cause a physical change to the environment.

In addition, according to the Project Requirements (Section II.C) on pages 14-20 of the solicitation manual, "All project activities must:

- Be located and conducted within California.
- Benefit the jurisdiction applying for the grant and any other jurisdictions identified in the Application."

Applicants can submit one (1) application for one (1) or more of the project activities identified as items 1–5:

1. Community Building Decarbonization Planning
2. Municipal Building Decarbonization Planning
3. Advancing Municipal Operations to Support Building Decarbonization
4. Codes, Ordinances, and Voluntary Measures
5. Workforce Development

A higher score may be awarded for more comprehensive projects that include more than one (1) of the five (5) project activities identified in Section II.C of the solicitation manual (pages 14-20).

Additional information about each activity, as well as examples of acceptable tasks and products, are available in the “Technical Approach” section under the Project Narrative (6d) on the Application Form (Attachment 1).

It is also important to mention that funding is only available for project activities completed during the agreement term for any grants resulting from this solicitation.

Q26: Is this solicitation primarily for planning as opposed to actual projects?

A26: Yes. The focus of this solicitation is planning and projects must fall under at least one of the five eligible project activities. (See Section II.C of the GFO manual). Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

Q27: We would like to use the funding for extensive outreach to research various sentiments regarding decarbonization in the city. Would an extensive outreach project qualify for this funding?

A27: It would depend on the scope of the project and the specific project activities. Extensive outreach alone may not qualify for this funding. Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

It is also important to note that according to the Unallowable Costs (Section II.G) on pages 23-24 of the solicitation manual, the following associated with community engagement and outreach are unallowable costs:

- Direct cash benefits or subsidies to participants.

- Food or beverages.
- Participant incentives, such as door prizes, which are unrelated to specific community work.
- General meetings that do not specifically discuss or advance implementation of the LGBDC.

Q28: Would our project qualify for this solicitation if we are already in the process of planning for decarbonization in the city?

A28: It would depend on the scope of the project and the specific project activities. It is also important to mention that funding may only be used for project activities performed during the grant agreement term. Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

Q29: Would a solar project for a city hall and a community building qualify for this solicitation?

A29: No. Equipment purchases are not allowable costs under the solicitation and this does not seem to fall with any of the project activities

Q30: Would funding be considered if a pilot project is actively underway and there is planning and implementation simultaneously?

A30: It would depend on the scope of the project and the specific project activities. Please note that grant funds can only be used for expenses incurred during the term of the grant agreement. This solicitation cannot fund project activities that would cause a physical change to the environment. Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

Q31: Would my decarbonization pilot program with planning and research about how to aggregate residential units and bundle scopes of work qualify for this solicitation?

A31: It would depend on the scope of the project and the specific project activities. This solicitation cannot fund project activities that would cause a physical change to the environment. Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

Q32: Does the proposed project need to be related to a measure in a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) or a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP)?

A32: No. The proposed project does not need to be related to a measure in a PCAP or CCAP. Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

Q33: Would electric vehicle chargers for a municipality’s public fleet be an eligible funding activity for this solicitation?

A33: No. Equipment purchases are not allowable costs under the solicitation and this does not seem to fall with any of the project activities.

Q34: Would community engagement and focus groups with some restrictions on direct cash payments be considered an eligible activity for this solicitation?

A34: According to the Unallowable Costs (Section II.G) on pages 23-24 of the solicitation manual, the following associated with community engagement and outreach are unallowable costs:

- Direct cash benefits or subsidies to participants.
- Food or beverages.
- Participant incentives, such as door prizes, which are unrelated to specific community work.
- General meetings that do not specifically discuss or advance implementation of the LGBDC.

It would also depend on the scope of the project and the specific project activities. Community engagement and focus groups alone may not qualify for this funding. Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

Q35: For this solicitation, if equipment is eligible, what does “Advancing Municipal Operations to Support Building Decarbonization” mean?

A35: Please keep in mind that equipment purchases are an unallowable cost for this solicitation. Additional information is available in Unallowable Costs (Section II.G) on pages 23-24 of the solicitation manual.

“Advancing Municipal Operations to Support Building Decarbonization” refers to local government operational areas such as permitting, planning, inspections, and code compliance activities. The purpose of this activity is to update municipal operations so that jurisdiction staff can be more responsive to requests, provide more timely approvals and assistance, and minimize public and individual costs and timing involved in these processes. Please see Project Requirements (Section II.C) on pages 14-20 of the solicitation manual.

Additional information about this activity, as well as examples of acceptable tasks and products, is also available in the “Technical Approach” section under the Project Narrative (6d) on the Application Form (Attachment 1).

Q36: Can you provide examples of the Workforce Development activity?

A36: Examples of the Workforce Development activity tasks and products are available in the “Technical Approach” section under the Project Narrative (6d) on the Application Form (Attachment 1). Additional information is also available in Project Requirements (Section II.C) on pages 14-20 of the solicitation manual.

Q37: Can the funds be issued to a third party or does the local jurisdiction have to run its own program?

A37: A single eligible jurisdiction, such as a city or county, must be identified to serve as the primary applicant and would sign the grant agreement with the CEC if they are selected for an award. CEC will only pay grant funds to the primary applicant. In the application, applicants should describe the project team and how the task will be carried out. (See the evaluation criteria in Section IV.E of the solicitation manual.

A project that functions as direct “pass through” to a third party is discouraged unless the local jurisdiction is too small or lacks sophistication to implement. In this instance, it may be approved with a compelling application.

For more information on contracting and procurement requirements for Subawards and Subcontracts entered into between a Subrecipient and Lower-Tier Subrecipients and Vendors, please see the Draft Standard Terms and Conditions (Attachment 7) and Draft EECBG Subaward Federal Terms and Conditions (Attachment 8) posted on the [GFO-23-403 solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge>).

Q38: For this solicitation, can our vendor that produces the Muni Decarb Roadmap also put together a pilot project (e.g., microgrid) for the local jurisdiction to bid out?

A38: It would depend on the scope of the project and the specific project activities. This solicitation cannot fund project activities that would cause a physical change to the environment. Applications must include an explanation of how the proposed project aligns with one (1) of the five (5) project activities identified in Section II.C of the solicitation manual (pages 14-20). Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

In addition, a single eligible jurisdiction, such as a city or county, must be identified to serve as the primary applicant, which will be the Subrecipient of the grant award resulting from this solicitation.

For more information on contracting and procurement requirements for Subawards and Subcontracts entered into between a Subrecipient and Lower-Tier Subrecipients and Vendors, please see the Draft Standard Terms and Conditions (Attachment 7) and Draft EECBG Subaward Federal Terms and Conditions (Attachment 8) posted on the [GFO-23-403 solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge) (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-403-local-government-building-decarbonization-challenge>).

Q39: Can multiple project activities be included in a single application to fulfill multiple objectives from our climate action plan for this solicitation?

A39: Yes. A higher score may be awarded for more comprehensive projects that include more than one (1) of the five (5) project activities identified in Section II.C of the solicitation manual (pages 14-20). However, this solicitation cannot fund project activities that would cause a physical change to the environment. Please see the response to question 25 for more information about specific project eligibility requirements.

Q40: You mentioned that a higher score may be awarded for projects that include more than one project activity. Would a significant project that benefits a DAC but only includes a single project activity have a higher value?

A40: It would depend on the scope of the project and the specific project activities. It is correct that a higher score may be awarded for more comprehensive projects that include more than one (1) of the five (5) project activities identified in Section II.C of the solicitation manual (pages 14-20). The maximum points available for Evaluation Criteria number three (3) is 30 points.

During the scoring process, up to five (5) preference points will also be awarded for priority populations like DACs. More information about available preference points is in the Evaluation Criteria (Section IV.E) on pages 42-45 of the solicitation manual.

Q41: The CEC's definition of decarbonization seems narrow. Has the CEC considered transitioning from steel and carbon-intensive construction to innovative wood products such as mass timber, wood wool and fiber panels, and reduced carbon cement?

A41: This Q&A document only addresses the requirements of this specific GFO and cannot speak for the CEC's overall definition of decarbonization.

The focus of this solicitation is primarily on planning activities because it cannot fund project activities that would cause a physical change to the environment. For more information about who is eligible to apply for this solicitation, please see

the answer to question 12. Additional information on specific project eligibility requirements is available in the response to question 25.

In addition, the CEC's definition of decarbonization is available on the [Building and Home Energy Resource Hub](https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/building-decarbonization/building-and-home-energy-resource-hub) (https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/building-decarbonization/building-and-home-energy-resource-hub) under "What is Decarbonization?". Additional information about related CEC programs, supporting documents, and legislative background is also available on that webpage.

If you still have questions or concerns regarding the CEC's definition of decarbonization that are unrelated to this specific solicitation, please contact the Existing Buildings Branch at existingbldgdecarb@energy.ca.gov.

Application Format, Required Documents, and Delivery

Q42: If commitment letters do not apply, must we submit them?

A42: No. Only a group of jurisdictions or agencies applying as a consortium are required to submit commitment letters.

Q43: Should the applicant certification and commitment letters be addressed to the CAO, the CEC Chair, or someone else?

A43: The applicant certification and commitment letters, if applicable, should be addressed to the CAO listed in the Contact Information (Section I.K) of the solicitation manual on page 10.

Q44: Can applications be submitted via email?

A44: No. Hard copies, or submissions via email or fax will not be accepted for this solicitation. The only method for submitting applications in response to this solicitation is the [CEC's Grant Solicitation System \(GSS\)](https://gss.energy.ca.gov/Login.aspx), available at https://gss.energy.ca.gov/Login.aspx. Please see Method of Delivery (Section III.D) in the solicitation manual on pages 29-30 for additional information.

Q45: Are we able to add additional attachments and/or supporting documents in GSS that are not explicitly requested in the solicitation?

A45: Yes. Additional attachments and supporting documentation may be included with the application through GSS.

Please give yourself ample time to complete all steps of the submission process: do not wait until right before the deadline to begin the process. The CEC strongly encourages applicants to upload and submit all applications before 5:00 p.m.

because CEC staff will not be available after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends to assist with questions or the upload process. Please note that while we endeavor to assist all would-be applicants, we cannot guarantee that the CAO will be available for consultation on the due date, so please plan accordingly. Please see Method of Delivery (Section III.D) in the solicitation manual on pages 29-30 for additional information

Q46: When submitting signatures on application forms, is a wet signature preferred on applications, or is an internal e-sign process acceptable?

A46: The CEC may have waived the requirement for a signature on application materials for this solicitation. If a notice regarding CEC's waiver of the signature requirement appears on the [CEC Solicitations web page](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/solicitations), (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/solicitations>), the waiver applies to this solicitation. In the event of a conflict between the notice and any language in this solicitation regarding signatures, the notice will govern.

Q47: Will you please clarify how we should calculate the agreement start and end dates?

A47: The CEC must complete the entire solicitation process, post a NOPA, and take all awards to the August 2024 business meeting for approval. Following approval, it will take additional time to fully execute and sign the grant agreements. As a result, the anticipated start date for agreements funded by this solicitation is September 1, 2024. All work must be completed, and the final invoice submitted to the CEC by June 30, 2027.

Q48: Will there be in-person meetings?

A48: Meetings, briefings, and discussions may be held virtually via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or conference call. If a meeting can be attended remotely, it must be attended remotely. Travel should only be undertaken when it is the most effective means of conducting business and must be pre-approved by the CEC. Reimbursement of travel expenses will only occur when in-person attendance is required and requested specifically by the CEC. All travel expenses must adhere to State of California rates and reimbursement procedures and requirements.

Q49: Who will be on the Evaluation Committee for this solicitation?

A49: CEC staff members from the Efficiency Division who are knowledgeable and involved with the program areas addressed in this solicitation will be on the Evaluation Committee. Please remember to contact only the assigned CAO (Section I.K of the solicitation manual on page 10) if you have questions about this solicitation. CEC program staff are prohibited from directly corresponding

with potential applicants or replying to questions during this phase of the solicitation.

Q50: What documents are accepted for the applicant certification of authority to apply on behalf of the jurisdiction?

A50: According to the Application Content (Section III.D) on pages 30-35 of the solicitation manual, “Applicants must submit certification that they have authority to apply on behalf of their jurisdiction and that they are the sole entity applying on its behalf.”

The applicant certification should be addressed to the CAO listed in the Contact Information (Section I.K) of the solicitation manual on page 10.

A letter that includes these certifications may suffice for fulfilling this requirement. However, the CEC suggests that you confirm with your specific jurisdiction its preferred method for submitting this certification as required.

As stated on page 52 of the solicitation manual, “Public agencies that receive funding under this solicitation must provide an authorizing resolution approved by their governing authority to enter into an agreement with the CEC and designating an Authorized Representative to sign.”

Q51: Would the CEC accept the applicant certification from the Board of Supervisors after the application deadline as a post-submission attachment?

A51: No. According to the Application Content (Section III.D) on pages 30-35 of the solicitation manual, “Applicants must submit certification that they have authority to apply on behalf of their jurisdiction and that they are the sole entity applying on its behalf.”

As indicated in Application Evaluation (Section IV.A) on pages 36-39 of the solicitation manual, applications submitted without the required application certification will fail the Technical Screening Criteria, resulting in the disqualification and elimination of the application from further evaluation.

The applicant certification should be addressed to the CAO listed in the Contact Information (Section I.K) of the solicitation manual on page 10.

A letter that includes these certifications may suffice for fulfilling this requirement. However, the CEC suggests that you confirm with your specific jurisdiction its preferred method for submitting this certification as required.

As stated on page 52 of the solicitation manual, “Public agencies that receive funding under this solicitation must provide an authorizing resolution approved by their governing authority to enter into an agreement with the CEC and designating an Authorized Representative to sign.”

Q52: What is the page/word limit for responses on the Application Form of this solicitation?

A52: The Brief Project Description (section 5) on the Application Form (Attachment 1), requests a maximum of four hundred (words) for that section. Otherwise, there is not a page/word limit for responses in Attachment 1.

However, according to the Application Format (Section III.B) on page 29 of the solicitation manual, “All applications submitted under this solicitation must be typed or printed, as well as must adhere to the following formatting requirements:

- **Font:** Standard 11-point Arial or Tahoma font (excluding Excel spreadsheets, original template headers and footers, and commitment or support letters).
- **Margins:** A one (1) inch margin on all sides (excluding headers and footers).
- **Spacing:** Single-spaced with a blank line between paragraphs.
- **Other Formatting:** Pages must be numbered, and sections titled.”

Priority Community and Population Eligibility Requirements

Q53: Would the preference points consider only using the White House Screening Tool vs. the California-identified DACs and low-income tracts?

A53: Preference points will only be awarded using the federal criteria per the [White House Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/) (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>).

While preference points will be awarded using only the federal criteria, State data is also needed for reporting purposes.

For additional instructions and information, please see Evaluation Criteria (Section IV.E) on pages 42-45 of the solicitation manual, and the “Priority Populations” section under Preference Points (7a) on the Application Form (Attachment 1)

Q54: Is it a requirement that 40% of the benefits of the project go to DACs for individual projects to be eligible for this solicitation?

A54: No. Individual projects are not required to benefit DACs at a 40-percent minimum.

The LGBDC must comply with Justice40, which means grants awardees resulting from this solicitation must provide information to support the CEC's Justice 40 reporting to the DOE.

When completing the Application Form (Attachment 1), applicants must follow the instructions and indicate the census tracts identified as priority populations.

During the scoring process, up to five (5) preference points will be awarded for projects located in and benefiting priority populations as indicated in the Evaluation Criteria (Section IV.E) on pages 42-45 of the solicitation manual.

Q55: For this solicitation, does our project need to benefit our DAC at 40% minimum if our efforts are citywide?

A55: No. Projects are not required to benefit DACs at a 40-percent minimum. Please see the answer to question 54 for more information.

Q56: Does Justice40 require 40% of the benefits of the project to go to DACs? Or does it go to both Funding Group 1 and Funding Group 2?

A56: No. Projects are not required to benefit DACs at a 40-percent minimum regardless of the Funding Group. Please see the answer to question 54 for more information.

Future Solicitations

Q57: This solicitation does not include tribal governments. Does the CEC plan to release another solicitation that will include tribal governments?

A57: Yes. The CEC plans to release a separate GFO for tribal governments and intends to conduct meaningful consultations with Tribes. The goal is to allow Tribes interested in applying for funds a more flexible timeline and opportunity for input in program design.