# **Questions and Answers**

# **Tribal Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, Planning, and Workforce Training and Development**

**GFO-23-607**

**March 15, 2024**

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 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 below are from the solicitation manual (for example, “Section II.B” refers to Section II.B of the solicitation manual).

**Administration**

**Q1.** **Can CEC provide the pre-application workshop attendee list?**

A1. The pre-application attendee list of this workshop will not be publicly posted out of respect for tribal sovereignty.

**Q2.** **Can CEC provide the presentation slides from the pre-application workshop?**

A2. The [Pre-application Workshop Presentation](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/GFO-23-607_Pre-application_Workshop_Presentation_ada_0.pdf) is published on the solicitation website, https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-01/gfo-23-607-tribal-electric-vehicle-infrastructure-planning-and-workforce

**Q3.** **Can the CEC provide contacts for Tribal organizations that would be potential partners for the grant opportunity?**

A3. The CEC cannot provide a list of Tribal organizations to partner with. Please visit [Empower Innovation](https://www.empowerinnovation.net/) (https://www.empowerinnovation.net/) to access funding opportunities, curated resources, and clean economy partners. Please note that reference to any specific entity or services on the Empower Innovation website does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation of the entity or services by the CEC.

**Q4.** **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

* **Do the training programs and curricula need to comply with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations, specifically those pertaining to training development under this grant?**
* **Are nationally recognized certifications mandatory for the training programs, or can they be developed by qualified industry experts without national accreditation?**
* **If compliance with WIOA is required, what specific regulations and resources are available to assist grantees in meeting these requirements?**
* **If nationally recognized certifications are not required, what criteria will the CEC use to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the proposed training programs?**

A4. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act does not apply to projects funded under this solicitation.

Nationally recognized certifications are not required for EV workforce training and development activities funded under project activity three. Please include a resume for key project partners, such as industry experts, who are critical to the project due to their experience, knowledge, and/or capabilities for your project.

Performance data collected during workforce training and development activities and submitted in the final report will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and may include:

* Outreach objectives and outcomes.
* Baseline data: attendance, duration of training sessions, total time trained, trainee demographic data, and ethnicity information.
* Curriculum: syllabus, training topics, tests and exams.
* Outcomes: completion rates and certificates of completion; jobs, employment, and economic impact as a direct result of the project; Pre and post-training occupations, skills, and wage rates.

**Q5.** **If a tribe engages a consultant or agency to act on behalf of the tribe to help with the application and implementation of the solicitation, can the consultant sign off on the final application within ECAMS?**

A5. Consultants may submit an application on behalf of a tribe as Authorized Tribal Representative or Tribal Designee with written consent of the Tribal Council (pg. 33). Authorized Tribal Representatives or Tribal Designees must provide a letter demonstrating support from an eligible tribe for the proposed project. Letters of support from the represented tribe must be *signed* by the Tribal Council. No template or formatting guidelines are provided for letters of support (pg. 23 Solicitation Manual).

The consultant submitting the application must establish two accounts at [Energy Commission Agreement Management System (ECAMS)](https://ecams.energy.ca.gov/) (https://ecams.energy.ca.gov/)

1. An organizational account for the entity applying to the solicitation (i.e., consulting agency).
2. Individual user account, for individual(s) who will be submitting the application on behalf of the organization. The individual user will sign off on the application submitted through ECAMS.

**Project Requirements**

**Q6. Project Activity 1, charger requirements - If for L2 sites the minimum is 5 chargers, how many connectors will that be? Is there a minimum number of L3 chargers for both mixed sites and solely L3 sites? What number of connectors would it be for level 3s across the board?**

A6. L2 charging station sites must include a minimum of 5 L2 chargers per site. Each L2 charger must have a minimum of one charging port. Therefore, L2 charging station sites must have a minimum of 5 charging ports. A charging port may have multiple connectors, but it can provide power to charge only one EV through one connector at a time (pg. 33 Solicitation Manual).

L3, or direct current fast chargers (DCFC), charging station sites must include a minimum of 2 DCFC and one L2 charger (i.e. a minimum of 2 DCFC charging ports and 1 L2 charging port). (pg. 9 Solicitation Manual)

**Q7.** **Funding Distribution – The solicitation manual outlines distribution of funding and a reimbursement mechanism for project activity 1, but does not allude to how it would work for activities 2 and 3. Would funds be distributed in the same manner? i.e Company X invoices tribe for a feasibility study and tribe provides said invoice to CEC. Does the CEC provide payment on the invoice, how long does this take, and are the parameters of paying the vendor the same (14 days)? Is there a similar facility for prepayment of services and what would the criteria be?**

A7. Any allowable expenditures that are incurred are eligible for reimbursement. An incurred cost is a project expense for which the Recipient has become liable (legally obligated) to pay. This applies to all allowable expenditures under project activity 1, 2 or 3.

As an example, if the Recipient enters into a legally binding agreement to pay for a piece of equipment, the Recipient may invoice the CEC for the cost of that equipment, even if the Recipient has not actually paid for the equipment. As a second example, if Subcontractor X invoices the Recipient tribe for a feasibility study, the Recipient may invoice the CEC for Subcontractor X’s work as long as the Recipient has a legal obligation to pay Subcontractor X for that work.

In most circumstances, CEC processes an invoice, and payment by check is issued within 30 days of receipt of the invoice. Note that the Recipient must pay all incurred costs for which it has invoiced the CEC within 14 calendar days of receiving payment. See Attachment 10, Exhibit C, Section 17 Payment of Funds and Exhibit C- Appendix 1 Section 6 Incurred Costs for more information.”

**Q8.** **Project Funding – For an application that applies to all 3 project activities, can the CEC award funding for part of the application (e.g. only project activity 1) or does it have to be an award for the entire application? The idea would be to submit an application that includes all project activities.**

A8. Applicants are asked to submit a single application for one or more of the three project activities. If the funds available under this solicitation are insufficient to fully fund a grant proposal, CEC reserves the right to recommend partially funding that proposal. In this event, the proposed Applicant/Awardee and Commission Agreement Manager (CAM) shall meet and attempt to reach agreement on a reduced scope of work commensurate with the level of available funding (pg 3 Solicitation Manual).

**Q9.**  **If certain sections (i.e local health form and CEQA) are deemed not applicable by the tribe due to proposed site being on tribal land in conjunction with the tribe waiving these requirements, should the tribe provide a general waiver outlining what attachments and forms do not apply to them?**

A9. The environmental compliance forms ([Attachment 06 CEQA Worksheet](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-01/06_GFO-23-607_Att_06_CEQA_Worksheet_ada%20%28ci%2012-29-23%29.docx) and [Attachment 07 Localized Health Impacts Information](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-01/07_GFO-23-607_Att_07_Local_Health_Impacts_Information_ada.docx)) take into account different types of environmental compliance that might apply to your project - not just CEQA. The CEC is subject to CEQA when approving grant awards and is required by law to consider local health impacts for these grant awards. CEC, therefore, requires the information in these attachments to assist in making CEC’s own CEQA determination and to assist in developing and publishing a localized health impacts report for this solicitation. If you have been communicating with your local CEQA agency or have a letter of exemption or permit application stamped as received by your local CEQA agency, please include them with the Attachment 06 CEQA Worksheet.

**Q10.** **Eligible costs - can the cost of writing the grant application be an eligible cost we can include in the budget request?**

A10. No, all grant recipient expenditures must occur within the approved project term (i.e. between the grant agreement start and end date).

**Eligibility Requirements**

**Q11.** **What if the applicant has experience managing environmental and infrastructure grants but not experience installing electric chargers? The grant would list hiring a specialist in installation. Does that qualify as team qualification and experience? How would we submit a resume for someone we have not hired for a grant that we don’t know if we will receive?**

A11. If specialists or subcontractors have not been selected at the time of project application please explain why in your project narrative. Please see Attachment 10 Terms and Conditions Section 8c Personnel or Subcontractor Changes for more information about selecting or adding specialists or subcontractors during project implementation.

**Q12.** **Would the San Diego American Indian Health Center (SDAIHC) be eligible for this grant?** **We are a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and an Urban Indian Organization, meaning that more than half of our board of directors are American Indian and Alaska Native, but we are not affiliated with one specific tribal government as we serve Urban Indians.**

A12. Unfortunately, the San Diego American Indian Health Center would not be eligible. Page 6 of the solicitation manual states: “ 'Tribal Organization' refers to a corporation, association, or group controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by a Federally Recognized Tribal Government or California Native American tribe that is subject to its laws, the laws of the State of California, or the laws of the United States.”

**Q13.** **Do consortiums fall under the definition of a Tribal Organization? Are consortiums eligible for this opportunity?**

A13. Yes, page 6 of the solicitation manual states: “ 'Tribal Organization' refers to a corporation, association, or group controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by a Federally Recognized Tribal Government or California Native American tribe that is subject to its laws, the laws of the State of California, or the laws of the United States.”

**Q14.** **Are electric school bus projects with school districts (assuming they meet tribal requirements) eligible to apply for this solicitation?**

A14. Vehicle incentives for electric school buses (ESB) are not an allowable cost for this solicitation (pg 16 solicitation manual). Applicants may apply for funding to install ESB charging equipment, supporting infrastructure, and associated resiliency technologies. Pre-deployment planning activities for ESB infrastructure planning activities to prepare grant recipients to apply for future funding opportunities and to provide a clear path forward for ESB adoption are eligible costs, as well as ESB Workforce Training and Development activities.

**Q15.** **Please confirm whether only one tribe is eligible to be served in each application.**

A15. More than one tribe can be eligible to be served on a single application as long as the Authorized Tribal Representatives or Tribal Designees from each tribe being served provides a letter demonstrating support from an eligible tribe for the proposed project signed by the Tribal Council.

Solicitation Manual listed anticipated Q&A publication as “Week of March 11, 2024”