# **Questions and Answers**

# **Technical Assistance for Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure Funding**

# **GFO-24-605**

**February 20, 2025**

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

**A1.** The pre-application workshop presentation for GFO-24-605 Technical Assistance (TA) for Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure Funding is published on the solicitation website, [Pre-Application Workshop - GFO-24-605 - Technical Assistance for Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure Funding](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2024-12/pre-application-workshop-gfo-24-605-technical-assistance-zero).

**Q2. Will the CEC support TA providers with outreach and engagement support? For example, posting workshop notices on Energy Commission communication channels?**

**A2.** Yes, the CEC can support TA providers with outreach regarding grant-related events. For example, if a TA provider is organizing a workshop for prospective TA recipients, the CEC can amplify the effort by posting notices to reach more prospective recipients.

**Q3. Can the CEC assist participants with grant writing questions or support on any level?**

**A3.** For open solicitations, the CEC holds pre-application workshops, provides an opportunity for written questions to be submitted, and publishes responses to questions. CEC staff are unable to directly answer questions outside of pre-application workshops or published Q&A documents.

**Q4. Is there currently a vendor working on this effort? If so, please provide the name of the vendor as well as the associated contract term (start/end date), and dollar amount.**

**A4.** No, a vendor is not currently working on this effort.

**Q5. Is this a new grant opportunity? If not, is there a list of past awardees to understand the types of organizations that apply or possibly find organizations that might be interested in partnering?**

**A5.** Yes, this is a new grant opportunity. There is no list of past awardees.

**Q6. Can you please describe the similarities and differences between the present GFO and RFP-24-601 – Technical Assistance for Medium- and Heavy-Duty (MDHD) Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure Blueprint Development?**

**A6.** These are two distinct funding opportunities. RFP-24-601 focused on selecting a contractor to provide technical support for and to develop planning “blueprint” documents for medium- and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles and their infrastructure. The application window for RFP-24-601 is closed.

In contrast, GFO-24-605 is focused on selecting entities that will provide technical assistance to other entities that apply for ZEV infrastructure deployment funding opportunities. It is not specific to any vehicle sector, nor is it focused on the development of ZEV infrastructure blueprint documents.

**Q7. Given that no match is required for this effort, please provide the reason it is specifically mentioned on page 24 of 40 under item 5.**

**A7.** No match is required under this solicitation; however, the CEC recommends that the applicant budgets for expenditures that the CEC will not reimburse, such as insurance. There is no requirement to document these match expenditures in the budget.

**Q8. Is there any specific software and/or database that the Contractor is required to use for this contract?**

**A8.** No, the solicitation does not require specific software and/or database be used. However, the contractor should be able to effectively use relevant systems for reporting and communication.

**Q9. Will the CEC expect the recipient(s) to support applicants for Technical Assistance from across California, or would a specific focus on one geographic subregion be acceptable? Would an emphasis on one geographic subregion impair the applicant’s score?**

**A9.** The CEC expects the TA recipient(s) to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to support applicants for technical assistance from across California. Applicants will be scored on the degree to which they meet the criterion regarding team experience and qualifications, project implementation and readiness, project budget and cost effectiveness, and community benefits per Section IV.E. That said, the CEC may work with applicant(s) proposed for award to develop agreements that cover different geographic regions within California. However, that decision will come after the CEC has announced any proposed award(s).

**Q10. Would the CEC consider segmenting awards based on geography, leveraging applicant’s specific knowledge of regional priorities and challenges?**

**A10.** Yes, the CEC may consider segmenting awards based on geographic focus, leveraging specific regional knowledge. However, that decision will come after the CEC has announced any proposed award(s).

**Q11. Will the CEC awardee cover different geographic regions?**

**A11.** The CEC may work with applicant(s) proposed for award to develop agreements that cover different geographic regions within California. However, that decision will come after the CEC has announced any proposed award(s).

**Q12. Can the CEC’s awardee partner with other program awardees on proposals to CEC programs?**

**A12.**The TA provider awardee(s) and its subcontractors and project partners are prohibited from participating as an applicant, subcontractor, or match-funding or other partner in any project awarded under any solicitation or CEC-funded incentive project in which the Recipient has provided or may provide technical assistance, as the CEC in its sole discretion may determine. Please refer to terms and conditions related to conflicts of interest which will be part of the resultant grant agreement.

**Q13. If an organization applies to be a TA provider through this solicitation, would they be ineligible to apply for CEC grant funding to support ZEV infrastructure development as an implementer?**

**A13.**  CEC cannot in this Q&A advise on specific entities’ eligibility as not all factors are known. However, the answer is likely yes. The Recipient and its subcontractors and project partners are prohibited from participating and agree not to participate in any manner (e.g., as an applicant, subcontractor, or match-funding or other partner) in any project awarded under any solicitation in which the Recipient has provided or may provide technical assistance, as the CEC in its sole discretion may determine. Please refer to terms and conditions related to conflicts of interest which will be part of the resultant grant agreement.

**Q14. Will the CEC extend the grant period if needed to match the program awardee’s contract dates?**

**A14.** All work must be scheduled for completion within 6 years from the start date and no later than March 31, 2031 to allow timely processing of final invoices before the liquidation date of CEC funds (Section III.D.4).

**Q15. Would additional CEC funding be available if an extension is granted to a program participant?**

**A15.** Projects under this solicitation are eligible for a maximum of $2 million.

**Q16. The solicitation says, “Projects are eligible for up to $2 million.” To clarify, does this mean that a TA provider may apply for up to $2 million in providing a range of TA services? Or is the $2 million referring to the implementation of grant-funded ZEV infrastructure projects?**

**A16.** The $2 million refers to the amount that the TA provider may apply for to offer a range of technical assistance services.

**Q17. Can the CEC describe how pricing should be structured? On a per-project basis? On a cost-plus basis? How will the CEC compare cost proposals between applicants?**

**A17.** The CEC does not have a specific recommendation on the pricing structure, but the CEC will compare cost proposals based on factors identified in Section IV. E., including, in part, the degree to which: the proposed budget is justified and reasonable relative to the project goals, objectives, and tasks; the proposed project is fiscally sustainable; and administrative and overhead costs are minimized.

## Project Requirements

**Q18. The solicitation states, "All work must be scheduled for completion within 6 years from the start date and no later than March 31, 2031." Is there a minimum term of service that the provider must provide (e.g., at least 4 years of technical assistance)? What is the expected or preferred project duration?**

**A18.** The solicitation specifies that all work must be completed within 6 years, but there is no specific minimum term or expected duration for the technical assistance. The TA provider must demonstrate their ability to support recipients throughout the duration of their awards, if needed. The latest completion date is March 31, 2031.

**Q19. How will the CEC be involved in selecting communities for technical assistance? Will the CEC be involved in those decisions, or will the TA provider be solely responsible for those decisions?**

**A19.** TA provider(s) selected through this solicitation will be required to provide a fair, bias-free mechanism by which potential TA recipients apply for and are selected to receive technical assistance. The TA provider(s) will provide a recommendation to the CEC for approval regarding which applicants receive TA support. All TA recipients are subject to CEC review and approval; the TA provider(s) will not be solely responsible (Section II.B.1).

**Q20. Is an AI-enabled platform that assists in the automatic matching and assistance in technical writing eligible for this opportunity? Would it help to provide discounts for disadvantaged communities?**

**A20.** While an applicant may use AI to provide TA services, this solicitation is not for software development for which use fees are then charged. Costs for software development are not eligible for CEC reimbursement or match share costs (Section II. C.). However, subscription costs for commercial software that is used for providing technical assistance is an eligible cost for CEC reimbursement or match cost (Section II.C.). Additionally, costs to adapt or modify software for providing technical assistance are considered an eligible CEC reimbursement cost and/or match share cost.

**Q21. Can the proposed project focus on providing technical assistance to one or more of the five identified eligible TA recipients (California Native American tribes, California Tribal Organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and local governments) or the project must target providing the technical assistance to all five identified eligible TA recipients?**

**A21.** The project can focus on providing TA to one or more eligible recipients of TA.

**Q22. As the TA Provider, when determining the eligibility criteria for TA recipients, can we focus on a particular group or cohort, or do the TA recipients have to be any and all organizations that meet the Eligibility Requirements of the solicitation?**

**A22.** The TA provider can focus on specific groups or cohorts within the eligible categories (e.g., California Native American tribes, community-based organizations, etc.), provided that the overall project still adheres to the eligibility requirements of the solicitation (Section II.B). However, it is important to ensure that the selection process aligns with the goals of the program and provides fair access to all eligible TA recipients. Additionally, applicants will be evaluated on the degree to which the proposed approach for screening and prioritizing TA recipients will result in a diverse pool of TA recipients (Section IV.E).

**Q23. Is the expectation that outreach and support be provided across the entire state?**

**A23.** The CEC expects the TA recipient(s) to have the knowledge, skills and abilities to support applicants for technical assistance from across California. Applicants will be scored on the degree to which they meet the criterion regarding team experience and qualifications, project implementation and readiness, project budget and cost effectiveness, and community benefits per Section IV.E. That said, the CEC may work with applicant(s) proposed for award to develop agreements that cover different geographic regions within California. However, that decision will come after the CEC has announced any proposed award(s).

**Q24. Is the expectation that the majority of the project effort be provided virtually/remotely or in person?**

**A24.** There is no requirement or expectation regarding the format or forums under which the project effort is conducted, or the TA is provided. TA providers should utilize forums and formats that meet the needs of their targeted recipients.

**Q25. Please confirm that the minimum of 10 TA recipients is for the life of the grant term (i.e., six years) as opposed to every year of the grant term of six years.**

**A25.** TA providers must support a minimum of 10 TA recipients over the life of the grant term (Section II.B.3).

**Q26. Is there a dollar limit on grant funds distributed to subrecipients?**

**A26.** There is no specific dollar limit on the funds distributed to subrecipients.

**Q27. Please confirm that over the course of the entire grant period of six years, the expectation is that there will only be one kick off meeting, one Critical Project Review meeting, twenty-four quarterly progress reports, one Final report, and one Final meeting.**

**A27.** The expectation is that there will be one kick off meeting, one initial critical project review meeting, twenty-four quarterly progress reports, one final report, and one final meeting. The CEC reserves the right to schedule additional critical project reviews, if necessary.

**Q28. Is subscription cost to a commercial software that is used for providing technical assistance to beneficiaries an eligible CEC cost and/or match cost?**

**A28.** Subscription costs for commercial software that is used for providing technical assistance is an eligible CEC cost and/or match cost (Section II.C.).

**Q29. Is the labor cost incurred to adapt or modify a software for use in this project to provide technical assistance considered an eligible CEC cost and/or match cost?**

**A29.** Costs to adapt or modify software for providing technical assistance are considered an eligible CEC reimbursement cost and/or match share cost. However, costs to develop software are not considered an eligible CEC reimbursement cost or match share cost (Section II.C.). Adapt or modify a software means making changes to an existing software application to better suit a specific need while developing a software refers to creating a completely new software application from scratch.

**Q30. Can labor rates be adjusted/escalated over time due to the long performance period?**

**A30.** It may be possible to amend the agreement to change rates. The hourly or monthly rates provided shall be unloaded (before fringe benefits or indirect costs) (Section III.D.5.2.a). When estimating rates, the applicant should account for likely salary increases that will occur over the life of the grant. Visit the ECAMS [Budget Category Guidance](https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources/ecams-resources/budget-category-guidance?auHash=cEItgat6JNbO9BFGeVqe4E5T6koCOgTaqliFX6bmwtg) for more information.

## Eligibility Requirements

**Q31. For a company that offers both technical assistance and transportation electrification deployment, can an employee perform work for both areas under this GFO?**

**A31.** CEC cannot in this Q&A advise on specific entities’ eligibility as not all factors are known. However, the answer islikely not.As part of the resultant grant agreement, applicant(s) proposed for an award will be required to agree to terms and conditions related to conflicts of interest which will be part of the resultant grant agreement.

**Q32. Is a selected recipient of this solicitation able to simultaneously support grant writing assistance for companies and/or organizations for the same grant solicitation that technical assistance will be provided?**

**A32.** CEC cannot in this Q&A advise on specific entities’ eligibility as not all factors are known. However, the answer is likely not. Applicants proposed for award under this solicitation will be required to agree to terms and conditions related to conflicts of interest which will be part of the resultant grant agreement.

**Q33. Do I qualify to be a third-party implementer, and would I be able to assist more than one company with their application for this solicitation?**

**A33.** CEC cannot in this Q&A advise on specific entities’ eligibility as not all factors are known. If you meet the qualifications outlined in the solicitation, you may qualify as a third-party implementer. There are no restrictions on assisting more than one company with their application for this solicitation; however, an entity can only participate as a project partner in multiple proposals as long as they are not listed as a major subrecipient (Section I.H.).

**Q34. I understand an applicant can only submit one proposal application, but can an entity/organization participate as project partner/subrecipient (not applicant nor major subrecipient) in multiple proposal applications?**

**A34.** CEC cannot in this Q&A advise on specific entities’ eligibility as not all factors are known. Applicants can only submit one application under this solicitation and should not be listed as a major subrecipient on other applications. However, an entity can participate as a subrecipient in multiple proposals as long as they are not listed as a major subrecipient (Section I.H.).

**Q35. Are private entities that are not utilities, but are investor-owned or traded, eligible to apply?**

**A35.** Yes. All public and private entities except for investor-owned utilities are eligible to apply.

**Q36. Can I apply as an LLC or nonprofit 501c3?**

**A36.** CEC cannot in this Q&A advise on specific entities’ eligibility as not all factors are known. The solicitation is open to all public and private entities except for investor-owned utilities.

**Q37. As a sole proprietorship, our company has a Fictitious Business Name but is not required to be registered with the Secretary of State. Please advise if there is any additional documentation that you require from sole proprietorships?**

**A37.** Please see Section II.A.3 for specific registration requirements. Sole proprietors using a fictitious business name must be registered with the appropriate county and provide evidence of registration to CEC prior to their project being recommended for approval at a CEC Business Meeting.

**Q38. We (a water district) are looking to apply for this grant to get a consultant to provide assistance with identifying grant opportunities, support with filling out the application and submittal for construction/implementation of ZEV infrastructure. Would we be able to apply for this grant to cover the cost for the consultant services?**

**A38.** CEC cannot in this Q&A advise on specific entities’ eligibility as not all factors are known. However, the answer islikely not, as the purpose of this solicitation is not to cover consultant costs for one entity. Thepurpose of this solicitation isto seek one or more third-party implementers to provide technical assistance for communities eligible to seek federal and state funding for ZEV infrastructure. After an award(s) is made under this solicitation and an agreement is finalized, the CEC and the TA provider(s) will work together to determine specific eligibility requirements for TA recipients. TA providers will, at minimum, assist in identifying grant opportunities, support successful application development and submittal, and support project implementation for entities eligible for ZEV infrastructure funding.

**Q39. Could an EV charging station with a store in a disenfranchised neighborhood be eligible for this grant?**

**A39.** No. The purpose of this solicitation isto seek one or more third-party implementers to provide technical assistance for communities eligible to seek federal and state funding for ZEV infrastructure. After an award is made under this solicitation and an agreement is finalized, the CEC and the TA provider(s) will work together to determine specific eligibility requirements for TA recipients. Purchasing or installing EV charging infrastructure is not eligible under this solicitation.

**Q40. Is a zero-emission driveline manufacturer eligible for this grant?**

**A40.** The solicitation is open to all public and private entities except for investor-owned utilities. The purpose of this solicitation isto seek one or more third-party implementers to provide technical assistance for communities eligible to seek federal and state funding for ZEV infrastructure.

**Q41. Can beneficiaries for receiving the technical assistance be private entities/companies such as small fleets operating in disadvantaged communities? Or the beneficiaries must be only California Native American tribes, California Tribal Organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and local governments located in or providing benefits to Justice40, disadvantaged, or low-income communities in California?**

**A41.** Private entities, such as small fleets in disadvantaged communities, may be beneficiaries of the technical assistance, in addition to the specified entities like California Native American tribes and community-based organizations. The awarded TA provider(s) will develop a process for selecting TA recipients in consultation with the CEC.

**Q42. Can community-based organizations representing small fleet operators operating or located in disadvantaged- or low-income communities be eligible TA recipients?**

**A42.** Community-based organizations representing small fleet operators operating or located in disadvantaged- or low-income communities may be eligible TA recipients.