**Community Energy Reliability and Resilience Investment (CERRI) Program**

**Round 2 Solicitation**

**GFO-23-312r2**

**Questions & Answers Set 03**

**August 21, 2025**

The most up-to-date solicitation documents (including the Grant Funding Opportunity (solicitation) manual) are available at the [solicitation webpage](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-05/gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment) available at https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-05/gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment.

On May 21, 2025, the California Energy Commission (CEC) held a [Pre-Application Workshop for the CERRI Program Round 2 Solicitation](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-05/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy). The workshop slides and recording can be found at: https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-05/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy.

Additionally, the CEC hosted three “How-To Apply” Workshops, covering various aspects of the CERRI Program’s application process. The workshop slides and recordings can be found at each workshop’s event page:

* [How-To Workshop 1: Project/Applicant Eligibility, Project Narrative form, and Project Metrics Form](../Round%202%20Q%26A%20Set%202%20CERRI%20GFO-23-312r2/How-To%20Workshop%201%3A%20Project/Applicant%20Eligibility%2C%20Project%20Narrative%20form%2C%20and%20Project%20Metrics%20Form) available at https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-06/cerri-program-how-workshops-gfo-23-312r2-projectapplicant.
* [How-To Workshop 2: Budget Forms, Site/Match Commitment Letters, and Vendor Quotes](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-06/cerri-program-how-workshops-gfo-23-312r2-budget-forms-sitematch) available at https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-06/cerri-program-how-workshops-gfo-23-312r2-budget-forms-sitematch.
* [How-To Workshop 3: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Forms](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-07/cerri-program-how-workshops-gfo-23-312r2-california-environmental)  available at https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-07/cerri-program-how-workshops-gfo-23-312r2-california-environmental.

The following answers are based on 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 or not its 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 GFO-23-312r2 Application Manual Addendum\_03, found on the webpage linked above. This document provides detailed responses to questions and comments submitted for the:

* Round 2 Technical Assistance ending on August 1, 2025
* First Question and Answer set ending on June 6, 2025
* Second Question and Answer set ending on July 18, 2025
* Pre-Application Workshop for GFO-23-312r2 Round 2 Community Energy Reliability and Resilience Investment (CERRI) Program on May 21, 2025
* How-To Workshop 1: Project/Applicant Eligibility, Project Narrative form, and Project Metrics Form on June 18, 2025
* How-To Workshop 2: Budget Forms, Site/Match Commitment Letters, and Vendor Quotes on June 25, 2025
* How-To Workshop 3: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Forms on July 2,2025

The written responses included in this document supersede any verbal responses provided during the workshops. Please send any additional questions or clarifications to cerri@energy.ca.gov.

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# Eligibility

## **Eligible Entities**

#### Do all applicants need to complete and submit the [Eligibility Request Form](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021) or only “other relevant entities” under category G? My utility meets the eligibility requirements of a-e.

CEC Response: Applicants that fall into one or more of the eligible entities categories (a)-(e) listed in Round 2’s solicitation manual do not need to fill out and submit an [Eligibility Request Form](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021). Only entities that fall under category (g) “Other” need to fill out and submit an Eligibility Request Form. However, entities that are not listed on the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s [EIA-861 Form (2023)](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9026) are strongly encouraged to submit an Eligibility Request Form.

## **Eligible Activities**

#### Would refining insurance underwriting models be considered within the scope of the CERRI Program if it were a component of a project focused on wildfire risk identification, modeling, and prevention within a utility’s service territory?

CEC Response: Refining insurance models is outside the scope of the CERRI Program and is not eligible for program or match funding.

 This approach does not align with the scope of our program for the following reasons:

1. Refining insurance models is not a direct investment and is unlikely to lead to direct investments in the grid’s physical infrastructure or operations that would help reduce wildfire risk to utility or grid-dependent community assets; and
2. The risk identification aspect of insurance underwriting models is not intended to identify risks to the grid per se, but rather wildfire risks to individual properties.

#### We are an entity partnered with a smart panel manufacturer and a major California IOU that is interested in submitting a grant application for the CERRI program. The smart panel manufacturer offers smart electrical panels that give homeowners circuit-level control, monitoring, and optimization of energy use—enabling electrification without costly service upgrades. Their new product is a utility-installed device at the meter that allows dynamic load management across neighborhoods, helping avoid infrastructure upgrades and enabling virtual power plant integration. This product will bridge home and grid needs to support widespread electrification with real-time intelligence and control. We are interested in integrating these smart electric panels with wildfire rebuilding and want to know if it is eligible for CERRI funding.

CEC Response: The proposed application of CERRI funds is not permissible based on the description provided. The CERRI Program is focused on funding project activities that align with the Eligible Activities listed in Section I.B.3 of the solicitation manual. These activities focus on improving grid infrastructure resilience and reliability. However, the provided project description appears to have a larger focus on demand-side management at individual homes to support electrification.

Integrating this with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) to establish a microgrid in a community at risk of fires or using it to form a Virtual Power Plant (VPP), or a combination of both, may be permissible. More details on the practical implementation of this concept are necessary to confirm allowability.

Please submit a completed [Eligibility Request Form](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.energy.ca.gov%2Fmedia%2F9021&data=05%7C02%7C%7Ccbe9c35d5a7d48ab58ad08ddd128d9cb%7Cac3a124413f44ef68d1bbaa27148194e%7C0%7C0%7C638896695576849330%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bLxRrnlQ6NSmsty3VPXYrVI5EZ4MQ3MqTFYjfIDwAV8%3D&reserved=0) with a detailed description of your proposed project and the eligibility category you believe it falls under. This will allow our team to conduct a comprehensive review and assess the eligibility of your project more effectively.

# Workforce Development

#### We are proposing a commercial battery installation project for an existing solar microgrid.

#### In addition to a collaborative Community Engagement plan, we are proposing a two-week, stipended workforce development (WFD) program that would allow a small number of trainees to:

#### Participate in a battery installation training curriculum.

#### Gain safety and job readiness skills.

#### Gain OSHA and CPR certification.

#### Learn about O & M.

#### Gain hands-on experience with residential battery installation for their tribal neighbors (with opportunities for future work and training).

#### Be hired by the utility for temporary, supervised construction roles on the CERRI supported commercial battery project at prevailing wage.

##### 4a. As part of overall trainee preparation for the CERRI supported project, can we request CERRI funding for the entirety of this training?

CEC Response: CERRI funding may only be applied to training activities that are directly related to eligible project activities. For example, all components of a WFD program must be directly related to the commercial battery installation or other proposed eligible activities. WFD programs leading to degrees or certifications that will not be completed in time for students to directly participate in CERRI project activities are not eligible for funding. However, staff training that enables personnel to perform project activities—such as installations or construction related to eligible activities—is considered allowable.

##### 4b. If it **is** fundable by CERRI funds, would trainees need to be paid prevailing wage during the two weeks of training in addition to the work on the project site (vs match funded stipends)?

CEC Response: Any laborer or mechanic contributing to a CERRI-funded project, including trainees, must comply with prevailing wage laws and the Davis-Bacon Act.

##### 4c. If this training is **not** fundable with CERRI funds, can we include the entire proposed training in match funds?

CEC Response: Match funding cannot be used to pay for WFD activities that are not directly related to the proposed eligible activity.

##### 4d. If this training is **not** fundable with CERRI funds, and we include this element in our scope of work, would they still need to be paid prevailing wage?

CEC Response: Training components that are not eligible for CERRI funding but are included in the project’s Scope of Work must still comply with all state and federal requirements, including California prevailing wage and the Davis-Bacon Act.

#  Funding

#### We are requesting clarification on the stackability of CERRI funds with other funding sources.

CEC Response: CERRI funds may be stacked with other sources of funding. However, there are limitations on what can be used to meet the match funding requirements. Match funds must meet the requirements outlined in Section III. B, “Match Funding Requirements,” of the solicitation manual. Specifically, match funds do not include any awards or funds from federal sources or the CEC (received, future, or contingent), nor do they include future or contingent awards from other entities (public or private), the cost or value of the project work site, or the cost or value of equipment and materials not used to help achieve the project’s goals. For example, federal funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and state funding from the CEC’s Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) program cannot be used as match funding.

#### Is a project funded by Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) eligible to submit as match funding for the project being submitted under the CERRI application?

CEC Response: Federal funding from the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) cannot be used as match funds for a project submitted under the CERRI funding opportunity. For more information on match funding requirements, please see the response to [Question 4](#_We_are_requesting).

#### Can you receive both California’s Self Generation Incentive Program (SGIP) funding and CERRI funding for the same project? Additionally, do you know whether, if there are changes to the SGIP incentive due to CERRI, you can then increase the funding requested from CERRI?

CEC Response: Our team is unaware of any changes to the California Public Utilities Commission’s SGIP incentives for projects seeking CERRI funding. All applicants for CERRI Round 2 must comply with the funding requirements outlined in the solicitation manual, particularly Section I.C, “Funding.” Any applicant seeking SGIP funding cannot request an amount greater than the maximum award specified in the solicitation manual. SGIP funds and CERRI funds can fund the same project. However, there are limitations on what can be used to meet the match funding requirements.

Match funds must meet the requirements outlined in Section III. B, “Match Funding Requirements,” of the solicitation manual. Specifically, match funds do not include any awards or funds from federal sources or the CEC (received, future, or contingent), nor do they include future or contingent awards from other entities (public or private), the cost or value of the project work site, or the cost or value of equipment and materials not used to help achieve the project’s goals. State funding from the SGIP can be used as matching funds if two conditions are met:

1. SGIP funds are not future/contingent (i.e., they have already been received), and a Letter of Commitment can be provided by the SGIP administrators. Letter of Commitment requirements can be found in Section VI.B.8, under “Commitment and Support Letter Form (Attachment 08)” of the solicitation manual; and
2. SGIP funds are being used to fund project activities listed in Section I.B.3 of the solicitation manual under “Eligible Activities.”

Please note that project activities not listed in Section I.B.3, such as generation components (wind turbines and solar panels), may be referenced as part of a broader CERRI project but are not eligible for CERRI funding and cannot be counted toward the required match.

# Application Requirements

## **Subprojects**

#### What is the process when multiple projects from the same organization are interested in applying for the CERRI grant? Are we allowed to combine project scopes into a single application, or must we choose only one qualified activity to pursue?

CEC Response: Only one application per entity/organization will be considered for this round of CERRI Program funding. However, applications may include multiple project activities and locations that meet the requirements outlined in Section I.B.3 of the solicitation manual under “Eligible Activities.”

Please note that each CERRI application is limited to three geographically distinct subprojects. Project activities are considered geographically distinct if they are located in separate utility service areas or non-adjacent census tracts within the same service territory, regardless of whether they are the same activity. If an activity eligible for CERRI funding occurs within the same census tract or in adjacent census tracts and addresses the same reliability or resiliency needs, they will be considered part of a single subproject.

#### Do you happen to have an example of a submitted single application that included two project activities?

CEC Response: In CERRI’s Round 2 [Pre-Application Workshop](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-05/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy), an example was provided. The example was: a utility serving multiple cities and counties submits an application proposing (1) grid infrastructure weatherization in one city, (2) reconductoring in a county 100 miles away, and (3) fire prevention systems in another area many miles away. These would be considered three geographically distinct subprojects. The workshop recording and presentation slides are available at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-05/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy>.

PacifiCorp, selected for award in Round 1, submitted an application that included two subprojects: reconductoring distribution lines at one location and installing advanced metering infrastructure across its service territory. The project was approved for funding at the [August 13 Business Meeting](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/meeting/2025-08/energy-commission-business-meeting), should you wish to learn more. Recording of the meeting is available on the CEC webpage at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/meeting/2025-08/energy-commission-business-meeting>.

Please note that the projects selected in Round 1 were chosen because they met all program requirements and received the highest scores based on the established evaluation criteria. While projects selected in Round 1 can serve as helpful examples for potential applicants, we strongly recommend reviewing the solicitation manual and aligning proposals with the scoring criteria, as these remain the most reliable guides for developing a competitive application.

#### Is there any advantage to including two distinct subprojects in one application, such as the review process weighing total combined impact more heavily, or is each subproject scored solely on its own merits?

CEC Response: CERRI Staff cannot comment on the likelihood of an application receiving funding or scoring highly based on including certain project components. However, because applicants may submit only one application per funding round, the CERRI Program permits the inclusion of up to three subprojects within a single application to help applicants meet funding minimums.

Including multiple subprojects does not provide a scoring advantage. All subprojects are evaluated collectively as part of the overall application package, not scored individually.

#### If both subprojects are submitted together and one does not qualify, can the other still proceed to award, or would the entire application be disqualified?

CEC Response: The application will not be disqualified if it includes a project activity that is not listed in Section I.B.3 of the solicitation manual under “Eligible Activities.” If the application passes the screening criteria outlined in Section VIII.E, Stage One: Application Screening, it will proceed to be evaluated and scored by the evaluation team based on the scoring criteria in Section VIII.F, Stage Two: Application Scoring of the solicitation manual.

If an application selected for award includes project elements that are ineligible for funding, the CERRI team will work with the applicant to remove those elements from the final awarded project. However, ineligible activities included in the project budget will be scored less favorably during the evaluation process, resulting in a lower overall application score.

#### In the past, have applications with multiple subprojects been more successful or less successful than those with only one, assuming equal quality?

CEC Response: The number of subprojects does not correlate with how highly an application will score. The evaluation committee scores the application based on the scoring criteria in Section VIII.F, under “Stage Two: Application Scoring” of the solicitation manual, rather than the quantity of subprojects within the project’s scope.

# Miscellaneous

#### I wanted to reach out to clarify a reference that the CERRI Round 2 Grant Application has deferred to in multiple required forms as we work through completing the grant application – they are the “DOE Terms and Conditions.” For example, Attachment 01 (Application Form) Questions 17-18 references these guidelines. However, our team cannot seem to locate the direct resource to ensure compliance. May you please provide a link or assist with navigating us to the mentioned resource for clarification on these elements? We can’t seem to find the DOE Terms and Conditions document file being mentioned.

CEC Response: The [CERRI Subaward Federal Terms and Conditions](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9024) can be accessed at: https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9024; located on the CERRI Program [webpage](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri-program__;!!MajgCvY!E1-ccPSZB9stbLo1TEcG22jbgUwAFijdG6cV49kHz_vwxHkmGBseCOD8eKka5xPj94wgyp2qc2TvzRNqKHaUfZnH_A$) under the “Resources” dropdown menu.

They are also linked in the GFO-23-312r2 solicitation manual Section V.B.

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# Eligibility

## **a. Eligible Entities**

#### Are California-based Municipal Utilities eligible as prime applicants? Or only investor-owned utilities (IOUs)?

CEC Response: California-based municipal utilities that fall into one or more of the eligible entity categories may apply as prime applicants:

* Electric grid operators
* Electric storage operators
* Electricity generators
* Transmission owners or operators
* Distribution providers
* Fuel suppliers

Additionally, a California municipal utility automatically qualifies as an eligible prime applicant if it is listed on the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s [EIA-861 Form (2023)](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9026).

If the applying entity is not listed in the EIA-861 form and does not meet any of the eligibility categories above, it is strongly encouraged to submit an [Eligibility Request Form](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021). The request should include documentation of electricity sales from the last 1-2 years, including megawatt hour (MWh) sales from a publicly available data source.

#### Are local governments eligible to apply for CERRI funding?

CEC Response: Local governments and municipalities that fit into one or more of the eligible entity categories are eligible as prime applicants. Entities, such as California municipal utilities, automatically qualify as eligible prime applicants if they are listed on the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s [EIA-861 Form (2023)](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9026). For more information, please see the response to [Question 1](#_Are_California-based_Municipal).

#### We are a small tribe in California and are wondering if we would be eligible for CERRI funding. Looking at the Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO), it seems like the program is focused on larger entities like utilities, but we wanted to reach out to make sure.

CEC Response: To apply for CERRI funding, lead applicants that fit one or more of the eligible entity categories (Electric grid operators, Electric storage operators, Electricity generators, Transmission owners or operators, Distribution providers, Fuel suppliers) are considered eligible. Also, a small or large utility automatically qualifies as an eligible prime applicant if it is listed on the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s EIA-861 Form (2023).

If the tribe is not listed on the EIA form but can provide documentation of actual electricity sales from the last 1-2 years, it is strongly encouraged to submit an [Eligibility Request Form](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021) to cerri@energy.ca.gov. The CEC and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) cannot provide a definite timeframe as to when an entity will be approved or denied eligibility, but the estimated timeframe is 30-65 days. However, past approvals have typically been granted in 1-2 weeks.

If the DOE determines the tribe is not an eligible entity, the tribe may still participate in a CERRI application as a tribal partner and/or sub-recipient in collaboration with an eligible prime applicant.

The CERRI Program requires applicants to partner with California Native American Tribes, California Tribal Organizations, and/or community-based organizations (CBOs) as part of their projects. These partners must be clearly identified and appropriately compensated in the Budget Forms (Attachment 05).

Tribal or CBO partners are expected to collaborate with the prime applicant to develop and implement a [Community Engagement and Impact Plan](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/10109) and to help facilitate community input throughout the project. The goal is to ensure that the project’s benefits of clean, safe, affordable, and reliable energy are equitably shared across the community.

#### Should a tribe partner with an investor-owned utility (IOU) like San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E)?

CEC Response: Tribes that are not eligible as prime applicants may partner with eligible applicants such as SDG&E. For more information, please see the response to [Question 3](#_We_are_a).

## **b. Eligible Activities**

#### We noticed that energy storage and microgrids are eligible technologies, but Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers are not. If an applicant has an integrated system that includes both energy storage and EV chargers, can they still pursue this Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO) and only seek funding for the storage component? Or does the integrating storage with EV chargers make the entire system ineligible?

CEC Response: CERRI funds may be used to support the energy storage portion of a project, provided the integrated microgrid system is designed to enhance system adaptive capacity. The DOE’s Grid Deployment Office (GDO) defines system adaptive capacity as “the ability of the electrical grid to continue to supply electricity where needed during disruptive events.”

The inclusion of EV chargers will not disqualify an application. However, EV chargers are not eligible for CERRI funding and cannot be used to meet the project’s match requirement. While ineligible activities, such as EV chargers, may be referenced in application materials (e.g., Project Narrative (Attachment 02)), they must not be included in the Budget Forms (Attachment 05).

Please note that any ineligible activities referenced in a broader project must still comply with all applicable federal funding requirements, including the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, the Davis-Bacon Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the [DOE Terms and Conditions](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9024), available at https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9024.

#### Can the program fund project planning and implementation, or can it only be funded for one of these phases?

CEC Response: The CERRI Program supports both project planning and implementation. However, the CERRI Program will not fund a planning process to determine the grid hardening actions to be implemented. These actions should already be clearly defined in the application. Applications for projects with shorter lead times—those that can begin construction immediately upon award—or those that demonstrate significant progress in the environmental review process will be evaluated more favorably, in accordance with the scoring criteria listed in Section VIII.F of the solicitation manual.

#### Can workforce development include helping current staff upskill and gain hours needed for certifications?

CEC Response: Yes, workforce development activities may include upskilling and obtaining certifications, provided they are directly relevant to the proposed project. For example, training staff to install solar panels would be ineligible, as solar generation is not an allowable activity under the program. In contrast, training staff to install behind-the-meter energy storage would be eligible.

#### Can you provide examples of eligible weatherization technologies and specify how they differ from residential weatherization?

CEC Response: For the purposes of GFO-23-312r2, eligible weatherization technologies are defined as “technologies or equipment that can be used to enhance reliability and resiliency of electric grid components in preparation for extreme weather conditions.” These technologies focus on weatherizing and hardening grid components, facilities, and systems to ensure they remain functional during extreme weather events.

Residential weatherization refers to the process of reducing the energy use and improving the comfort of residential buildings by upgrading the building envelope, HVAC systems, and other energy-consuming components. The focus of residential weatherization is to make buildings more cost-effective and comfortable to live in.

The [U.S. Department of Energy’s Guide on Low-Cost Grid Resilience Projects](https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/46060_DOE_GDO_Low_Cost_Grid_Resilience_Projects_RELEASE_508.pdf) provides examples of CERRI Program eligible weatherization and hardening activities available at https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/46060\_DOE\_GDO\_Low\_Cost\_Grid\_Resilience\_Projects\_RELEASE\_508.pdf

#### Our city owns an amusement park and is exploring the feasibility of implementing solar panels to meet the park’s energy needs, so we would like to know if this project is eligible for CERRI funding.

CEC Response: The project described would not be eligible for CERRI funding. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Section 40101(e)(2)(A) prohibits eligible entities from using grant funds to construct any new electric generating facilities. New generation (e.g., solar photovoltaic (PV) panels) may be referenced in a CERRI-funded project, such as a battery storage project, but it cannot be funded by the CERRI Program or used to satisfy the match requirement associated with the program.

Additionally, under Scoring Criterion 1, “Project Merit, Need, & Goals”, the evaluation committee will favorably score applications that 1) provide a description of how the project will decrease or eliminate the extreme weather risk(s) to the electric system within the target community and 2) sufficiently outline the degree to which the proposed project addresses the identified extreme weather hazard(s) and explains why it is the most cost-effective solution compared to alternative investments.

#### Our organization is interested in applying for funding for an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project that is split between water (which is ineligible for CERRI funding) and power. When it comes to documentation, does everything need to be explicitly separated to qualify for CERRI funding?

CEC Response: Ineligible water components may be referenced as part of a broader project but cannot be funded with CERRI or match funds. For guidance on application requirements when referencing activities not eligible for CERRI funding, please refer to the response to [Question 5](#_We_noticed_that_1).

If the water component constitutes a significant portion of the project, the CEC recommends separating the water and power elements. However, if including the water component strengthens the overall application and the applicant is willing to comply with the additional federal reviews and requirements, it may be referenced in the Project Narrative (Attachment 02).

#### Our platform also supports V2G (vehicle-to-grid) readiness and dynamic load management, all integrated directly into existing street lighting infrastructure. In this regard, will we be eligible to apply since our solution is not only a charging station?

CEC Response: Based on guidance from DOE, deployment of a smart EV charging platform and infrastructure designed to enhance grid resilience by operating as virtual power plant infrastructure is not eligible for CERRI funding at this time. The DOE advised the CEC to award projects that are explicitly consistent with the [[42 U.S.C.§18711(e)(1)(A)-(L)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title42-section18711&num=0&edition=prelim)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title42-section18711&num=0&edition=prelim), available at https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title42-section18711&num=0&edition=prelim.

EV chargers and EV infrastructure deployment are not eligible under the CERRI Program’s Round 2 solicitation. While EV chargers may be referenced in a CERRI project, they cannot be funded by the CERRI Program or used to meet the match requirement associated with the program. For more information on referencing ineligible activities in an overall application package, please see the response to [Question 5](#_We_noticed_that_1).

#### Can this solicitation fund (with cost-sharing) installation of one or more entire Distributed Energy Resource (DER) systems, i.e., including generation sources (wind turbines and/or solar panels), balance of plant construction costs, and storage capability?

CEC Response: As per the solicitation manual (see Section I.B.), “Use or construction of distributed energy resources (DERs) for enhancing system adaptive capacity during electrical system outages, including microgrid subcomponents and battery storage” is an eligible activity for CERRI funding. For the purposes of this program, the DOE’s GDO defines system adaptive capacity as “the ability of the electrical grid to continue to supply electricity where needed during disruptive events.”

Because the CERRI Program is designed to improve energy reliability and/or resilience in grid-connected communities, DER systems and battery storage must be interconnected to meet the “system adaptive capacity” requirement.

Generation components—such as wind turbines and solar panels—are not eligible for CERRI funding and cannot be counted toward the required match. While generation may be referenced as part of a broader CERRI project, it cannot be funded by CERRI. These components may appear in the Project Narrative (Attachment 02) but must not be listed on the Budget Forms (Attachment 05). For more information on referencing ineligible activities in an overall application package, please see the response to [Question 5](#_We_noticed_that_1).

Regarding the use of CERRI funds for “balance of plant construction costs,” CERRI may be used to purchase and/or fund the installation of certain microgrid components, including:

* Batteries that will be used to supply electricity during disruptive events
* Equipment or management systems required to integrate existing generation sources and/or a battery into a microgrid, such as an inverter
* Electric cables (to connect multiple buildings within the microgrid)
* Distribution equipment (protective devices, transformers, etc.) required to distribute power throughout the microgrid
* Microgrid controllers (includes the equipment required to balance the system and connect/disconnect from the main electric grid)

Construction costs directly related to these eligible components—such as pouring a concrete pad for battery placement or using heavy equipment to position batteries—are also allowable. However, construction costs for ineligible components (e.g., building a solar PV array) are not allowable.

Please note, CERRI funds cannot be used for permit fees or related expenses, with the exception of University of California grant recipients. These costs may, however, be included as part of the required match.

Each application may include up to three geographically distinct subprojects. For the solicitation’s definition of subprojects, please see the response to [Question 23](#_In_Section_1.).

#  Funding

#### Can one project be eligible for funding from two different entities, or would this jeopardize pursuing the CERRI grant? Specifically, can an entity apply for both federal and CERRI funding simultaneously? Our utility has submitted an underground project to California Office of Emergency Services - Federal Emergency Management Agency (CAL OES FEMA) for a hazard mitigation grant, and this proposal is currently under review.

CEC Response: Applicants may apply for both federal and CERRI grants simultaneously; however, federal funds cannot be used as match share for a CERRI-funded project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for CERRI funding for a separate section of undergrounding.

An applicant may submit an application that references the full project scope—including FEMA-funded components—but any federally funded elements cannot be counted toward the required match and will remain subject to applicable federal funding requirements. For more information on those requirements, please refer to [Question 5](#_We_noticed_that_1).

Please note that applicants may not submit the same application under both IIJA Section 40101(c) and Section 40101(d) within the same application cycle unless they are unsuccessful in one of the two applications. For additional details, please refer to Section V.B.4, “Application Limitation,” in the solicitation manual.

#### What are the match requirements for the round 2 grant funding opportunity?

CEC Response: Large entities, defined as those selling over 4,000 gigawatt hours (GWh) of electricity per year, must provide 115% match. Small entities, defined as those selling less than 4,000 GWh per year, must match 33.33% of their requested CERRI funds.

For example, a large entity requesting $10 million in project funding must provide an additional $11.5 million in match funding. A small entity requesting $10 million in project funding must provide an additional $3.33 million in match funding. For additional information about match funding requirements please refer to Section III.B, “Match Funding Requirements,” in the solicitation manual.

#### For a Group 1 Large entity applicant, the minimum award has been provided at $13,831,203 and a 115% match fund. What would the final projected project total be to remain eligible for application submission?

CEC Response: 115% of $13,831,203 is $15,905,883.45. Therefore, the final project total should be $29,737,086 to remain eligible for Round 2 funding.

$13,831,203 (grant) + (115% of $13,831,203) =
$13,831,203 (grant) + $15,905,883.45 (match) = $29,737,086.45 (project total)

# Application Requirements

## **Community Based Organizations (CBOs)**

#### What is the clear definition of CBOs, and can they include city, state, federal, and non-profit entities?

CEC Response: The CEC evaluation committee will evaluate proposed CBOs based on scoring criterion 3, “Community Engagement & Impact.” This evaluation will determine whether the organization meets the criteria laid out in Section III.A.1 of the solicitation manual. Specifically, if the proposed entity is a public or private non-profit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that:

* Has deployed projects and/or outreach efforts within the region (i.e., air bason, city, or county) of the proposed disadvantaged or low-income community or similar region.
* Has official mission and vision statements that expressly identify serving disadvantaged and/or low-income communities.
* Currently is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

For the purposes of this program, municipal, state, and federal entities are not CBOs.

These organizations may still partner with eligible entities that are applying as prime applicants, although doing so will not fulfill the project’s CBO requirement. However, partnering with one or more of the above organizations (in addition to a CBO) may contribute to the overall strength of an application/project.

#### Non-profit organizations that are recognized as 501(c)(3) non-profits may qualify as CBOs. Are local community colleges and/or California State Universities (CSUs) colleges acceptable CBO partners?

CEC Response: Local community colleges that are recognized as 501(c)(3) non-profits may qualify as CBOs.

CSUs are not non-profit organizations and do not qualify as CBOs for the CERRI Program. However, partnering with a CSU, along with a qualified CBO, may strengthen an application/project. For more information on this solicitation’s criteria for CBOs, please see the response to [Question 16](#_What_is_the).

#### Is it necessary for the CBO to be highly localized?

CEC Response: The CBO does not need to be highly localized. However, it must have experience in deploying projects and outreach efforts within the specific region of the proposed community, such as the relevant air basin or county. Additionally, the CBO must have an official mission or vision statement that clearly expresses its commitment to serving disadvantaged and/or low-income communities. For more information on this solicitation’s criteria for CBOs, please see the response to [Question 16](#_What_is_the).

#### What are the minimum and maximum funding amounts required for CBOs?

CEC Response: Applicants are required to allocate funding for the CBO(s) and/or tribe(s) involved in the project and must detail planned community expenditures in the Budget Forms (Attachment 05). However, for this round of funding, the CERRI Program has not established a minimum or maximum funding amount for CBOs or tribes. Provided that the CBO or tribe is compensated in some form, funding allocations to CBOs and/or Tribes are at the discretion of the prime applicant.

#### Can multiple CBOs be listed under one application?

CEC Response: Yes, multiple CBOs and tribal partners can be listed under one application. At least one CBO and/or tribal partner should be clearly identified and included as a compensated partner in the Budget Forms (Attachment 05) at the time of application.

#### Can one (1) city-wide CBO be considered for multiple subproject locations, or will each subproject require separate nonprofit partnerships?

CEC Response: Yes, one city-wide CBO can be considered for an application with multiple subproject locations. For more information on this solicitation’s criteria for CBOs, please see the response to [Question 16](#_What_is_the).

#### In Section III. Requirements, A. Project Requirements, 1. Meet Program Objectives of the published solicitation manual, it reads “Applicants are not required to submit finalized Community Engagement and Impact Plans with their applications” under CBO Engagement. What information is CEC requiring of the Community Engagement and Impact Plan by the time of application submission deadline? Please specify to what extent the plan will need to be developed.

CEC Response: Please refer to Prompt #12 under the Project Narrative (Attachment 02) form. This prompt outlines the details of the Community Engagement and Impact Plan that applicants must include in their application submissions. Specifically, each applicant is required to provide a summary of the planned engagement activities and goals for the project. A response should include:

* Planned Activities: Describe the specific engagement activities related to the proposed project (e.g., community input workshops, electric outage preparedness workshops, informational sessions on project benefits). Provide a brief explanation of how these activities will support the project and impact the community.
* Engagement Goals: Clearly outline the objectives of the engagement activities/efforts (e.g., does the planned event aim to raise awareness about the project, gather community input on the project, enhance electric outage preparedness?).

If applicable, also include:

* Alignment with Climate or Adaptation Plans: Explain how the project supports any existing Climate or Adaptation Plans in the target community(ies).
* Alignment with a Community Benefit Agreement: If a Community Benefit Agreement has been negotiated, summarize how the project aligns with or fulfills its commitments.

Additionally, Prompt 12 includes additional guidance on where to include Community Engagement and Impact Plan details throughout the application. For example, Applicants must ensure that the activities outlined in the Project Narrative (Attachment 02) align with the tables for “Planned Community Engagement Activities” and “Planned Community Engagement Events” found in the Project Metrics (Attachment 09). All planned activities and products must be included in the Scope of Work (Attachment 03).

## **Subprojects**

#### In Section 1. Basic Information, B. Eligibility, 5. Project Location and Maximum Number of Subprojects of the published solicitation manual, it reads “Applicants with up to three (3) subprojects should include them in a single application.” We are looking to submit an application for the eligible project of underground electrical equipment as it relates to grid hardening. The project covers city-wide efforts across various neighborhoods in a service area based on priority needs, with overall goals of replacing up to 15 miles of underground equipment, but no work timeline assigned to specific locations. Is an applicant able to submit this umbrella project as a single city-wide location or will up to 3 locations within the city need to be specified to remain eligible for this funding opportunity

CEC Response: No, a single city-wide location for an umbrella project is not eligible. To qualify for CERRI funding, applicants must specify up to three geographically distinct subprojects (locations) within the utility service territory. Project activities are considered geographically distinct if they are located in separate utility service areas or non-adjacent census tracts within the same service territory, regardless of whether they are the same activity.

Applicants must clearly identify the locations where project activities will occur and include relevant site details—such as size, zoning, or other characteristics—in the Project Narrative (Attachment 02). Additionally, applicants must list all census tracts associated with the project, along with their priority community designations, in the Application Form (Attachment 01) to enable the calculation of the Priority Communities Preference Point Score.

Applications should include sufficient project location information to complete both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Form (Attachment 06) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Questionnaire (Attachment 07).

#### How big of a geographical area can be considered one project for grant application purposes? Are we able to provide a range of zip codes? Could in-basin cable undergrounding covering multiple zip-codes be considered under one application? If so, is there a limit to how many combined zip codes can be considered one location?

CEC Response: Round 2 does not impose restrictions on the geographical area of a project, and applicants are not required to provide project zip codes. Instead, project census tracts must be listed in the Application Form (Attachment 01).

If the in-basin cable undergrounding activities occur within the same census tract or in adjacent census tracts—and address the same reliability or resiliency needs—they may be considered part of a single geographically distinct subproject. If the overall project can be divided into up to three geographically distinct subprojects, it may be submitted as a single application.

For further definition of subprojects, please see the response to [Question 23](#_In_Section_1.).

## **Attachments**

#### If a project does not involve any foreign nationals, does an applicant need to submit a document stating that, or do we just omit the submissions of Attachments 11 and 12?

CEC Response: If a project does not involve any foreign nationals, applicants may omit the submission of the Foreign National Participation Document (Attachment 11) and the Request for Unclassified Foreign National Access (Attachment 12).

#### Can an applicant make changes to the budget and statements of proposed work during award negotiations, agreement development, and after the award is made?

CEC Response: Minor changes to the budget and scope of work are allowable and expected during award negotiations, the agreement development process, and even after the award has been executed. These changes can happen for a variety of reasons (e.g., new tariffs, supply chain issues), and we recognize the need for flexibility.

However, it’s important to emphasize that any changes should remain minor and should not significantly alter the project’s scope. For example, if a battery storage project experienced the unexpected removal of the battery storage component, it would meaningfully affect the project and potentially change the original application’s score. This situation could lead to a stop work order on the project or even the loss of the award.

Once the agreement is executed, grant recipients/awardees may submit budget category reallocations to the CEC for approval. However, please keep in mind that the maximum rates are fixed. Specifically, the proposed rates, except for Direct Labor and Fringe Benefits, are capped and cannot change during the term of the agreement. Applicants and grant recipients must adhere to the requirements listed in Section VI.B.5, “Budget Forms.”

DOE will require budget revisions and reapproval in the event that the overall project cost fluctuates by 20% or greater; this implies that any increase or decrease of 20% or any alteration in project line items by 20%, such as the reassignment of personnel to contractual roles, will trigger this requirement.

If match funding or other project elements are lost, it may affect a project’s award status.

#### What is the preferred approach to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance?

CEC Response: Prime applicants will need to complete and submit the CEQA Form (Attachment 06) and the NEPA Environmental Questionnaire (Attachment 07) along with adequate documentation to comply with CEQA and NEPA. For specific requirements for each form and accompanying documentation, please refer to the following sections in the solicitation manual:

* + “Environmental Review Requirements” in Section III.A.3
	+ “CEQA/NEPA Review and Award Cancellation Rights” in Section V.B.5
	+ “California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance Form (Attachment 06)” in Section VI.B.6
	+ “National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Questionnaire (Attachment 07)” in Section VI.B.6

Projects that are further along in their environmental review process, with a clear plan for meeting compliance, are considered more “shovel ready.” Scoring Criterion 2 “Project Management” includes CEQA/NEPA compliance readiness as part of the score basis. If a project proposed for award requires environmental review that would not be resolved in a timely manner, CEC may cancel the proposed award and move on to funding the next highest scoring, passing candidate.

Projects that are already CEQA-exempt, NEPA-excluded, or have an existing Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact/programmatic Environmental Impact Review will be scored more favorably.

For more information, please review the [How-To Workshop 3: CEQA & NEPA](https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-07/cerri-program-how-workshops-gfo-23-312r2-california-environmental) recording and slides posted at https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-07/cerri-program-how-workshops-gfo-23-312r2-california-environmental.

#### Does a Tribe need to file a Build America, Buy America (BABA) waiver?

CEC Response: Yes, tribes are required to comply with the BABA requirements. Any recipient, including tribal entities, that cannot meet these requirements must submit a [BABA Waiver Request](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/11634) (a template is available at https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/11634) for review by the DOE. Applicants are encouraged to include any waiver requests with their application packages. While waiver requests submitted after the Notice of Letter of Intent (NOLOI) to fund will still be accepted, the approval process can be lengthy. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit requests as early as possible.

### **Project Metrics**

#### Can you provide us with more information on acceptable metrics for resilience and reliability improvements beyond SAIDI/SAIFI? Would addressing poor asset health at risk of failure be an acceptable resilience benefit in line with CERRI objectives? Would reporting on reduced ignition risk or emergency response time for a wildfire mitigation project be acceptable?

CEC Response: Reliability improvement metrics should demonstrate how the project will reduce the frequency of outages, improve service quality, or address existing system vulnerabilities. While reliability efforts may also indirectly reduce outage duration, the primary focus is on preventing service interruptions. Metrics to consider include:

* Number of outages
* Number of customer interruptions
* Number of customers experiencing multiple interruptions
* Number of outages reduced through wildfire mitigation
* Customer Average Interruption Duration Index (CAIDI)

Resilience improvement metrics should demonstrate how the project will strengthen the system’s ability to withstand and recover from disruptive grid events, such as extreme weather or wildfires. These metrics emphasize outage duration, recovery time, and system adaptability. Metrics to consider include:

* Number and type of repairs needed
* Number and type of customers benefiting from project
* Hours to restore 50/90/100% of customers following an outage event
* Hours to repair or replace equipment
* Outage recovery costs

Addressing poor asset health at risk of failure is an acceptable resilience benefit and aligns with the objectives of the CERRI Program. While upgrading aging infrastructure is an eligible activity, applicants should ensure that resilience metrics and benefits are clearly linked to reducing risks from extreme weather or other natural disasters.

For wildfire mitigation projects, reporting on reduced ignition risk and improved emergency response times is an appropriate way to demonstrate resilience improvements.

#### Can monthly electric bill savings be included as a project metric for a behind-the-meter energy storage project?

CEC Response: Yes, monthly electric bill savings may be included as a project metric for a behind-the-meter energy storage project. In the Project Metrics (Attachment 09), applicants who would like to include this metric may select the “Other” category and include a description of the proposed metric.

### **Project Schedule**

#### Does the CERRI Round 2 grant require specific performance periods for the duration of the proposed project (e.g., 3 or 5 years)? Or will this be up to the discretion of the applicant to assign the performance periods so long as the funds are used prior to the liquidation deadline of April 30, 2032, listed in the grant solicitation?

CEC Response: Projects funded by the Round 2 Grant Funding opportunity are expected to begin in the first quarter of 2026. Applicants must assign their own performance periods, provided the projects start in the first quarter of 2026 and end by April 30, 2032.

# Miscellaneous

#### Is there a specific format needed to submit questions about the CERRI Round 2 grant for the July 18 submission deadline? Should the questions be submitted through the ECAMS site, or would email be fine?

CEC Response: Please submit all program-related questions and requests for Technical Assistance via email at CERRI@energy.ca.gov.

Please submit questions related to application submissions in the ECAMS system to ECAMS.SalesforceSupport@energy.ca.gov before 5 p.m. PT on August 29, 2025.

#### What is the Assistance Listing Number (ALN), formerly known as the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number, for the CERRI Program?

CEC Response: The ALN/CFDA number for the CERRI Program is 81.254.

#### Are there plans for a Round 3 and, if so, approximately when would that announcement likely be issued?

CEC Response: The timing of the next funding round is dependent upon when the DOE opens and accepts applications for future 40101d formula funding years. The CEC plans to apply for funding for Years 4 and 5, when and if they become available. The CERRI Program does not have any additional information beyond what has been publicly released at this time regarding the impact to funds from the IIJA. The CERRI Program webpage “[Program Updates](https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri-program)” section, available at https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri-program, will be updated once further information is received.

#### Can the CERRI Program share the list of application winners and projects from Round 1?

CEC Response: The results of the CERRI Round 1 solicitation are available on the [GFO-23-312 Grant Funding Opportunity page](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-312-community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri). On December 12, 2024, the CERRI Program released a [Notice of Letter of Intent to fund four project proposals.](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/GFO-23-312_NOLOI_Results_Table_12-12-24_ada.xlsx) Funding of these proposals is contingent upon federal approval of the projects. As of July 2025, three of four projects have been approved by the DOE. The [Notice of Proposed Award (NOPA](https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/GFO-23-312_NOPA_Results_Table_2025-05-02_ada.xlsx)) for those projects can be accessed here https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/GFO-23-312\_NOPA\_Results\_Table\_FOA2736\_Part2\_2025-07-29\_ada.xlsx..

#### If selected for an award, can an award recipient change the site of a project or deploy a different technology solution either during award term negotiations or during the performance period so long as it still meets the objectives of CERRI and the intend of the submitted application?

CEC Response: If an awarded project proposes to change a project site and/or to deploy a different technology solution that will meaningfully affect the project, this could potentially result in a stop work order on the project or even the loss of the award, even if the proposed changes still meet the objectives of the CERRI Program and the original application’s intent. Ultimately, the answer to this question is circumstantial and depends on the proposed changes. Applicants and recipients are strongly discouraged from making major changes that could lead to lengthy project delays or the need to re-score an application, which could result in a canceled award

#### When navigating the EIA-861 report to determine the number of megawatt hours of electricity sold by an applicant, what year should the data be from?

CEC Response: The [U.S. Energy Information Administration’s 2023 Annual Electricity Power Report (EIA-861)](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9026) provides data from 2023. The CERRI Program will accept publicly available data that details electricity sales from 2023 and/or 2024.

# **Q&A Set 01 Contents**

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# Eligibility

## **Entities**

#### Who is the target audience for this solicitation? Is it targeting a specific region, type of project, or organization type?

CEC Response: The target audience for the second round of CERRI funding is eligible applicants and the Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and tribes that would be partnering with the prime applicant. Below is a list of entities that are eligible to apply for funding from the CERRI Program (as determined by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Section 40101(d) bill language):

* + 1. Electric grid operators
		2. Electricity storage operators
		3. Electricity generators
		4. Transmission owners or operators
		5. Distribution providers
		6. Fuel suppliers

If an entity wants to apply for funding as a prime applicant but does not fit neatly into one of these categories, it may submit an [Eligibility Request Form](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021) to CERRI@energy.ca.gov to request approval from both the CEC and the U.S. Secretary of Energy before the application deadline. More information on entity and project eligibility can be found in Section I.B of the solicitation manual.

Entities listed on the [U.S. Energy Information Administration’s EIA-861 Form (2023)](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9026) are automatically considered eligible entities. Entities that would like to apply for funding but are not listed in the EIA-861 form are strongly encouraged to submit an Eligibility Request Form.

Projects must be sited in California to be eligible for funding, but the CERRI Program scope is not limited to a specific region of the state.

#### Are eligible applicants for this program still Native American tribes, tribal organizations, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), governmental entities, academic institutions, national laboratories, and independent system operators?

CEC Response: Please see the response to [Question 1](#_Who_is_the). Each applicant must have a CBO or Native American tribe as project partner. The community or tribal partner must submit a commitment letter outlining its contribution and be properly compensated for its proposed work in an applicant’s budget form.

#### In GFO-23-312r2, under Section B.1, “Eligible Applicant,” an electricity generator is listed as an eligible entity. Since Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) are considered electricity generators, we would like to request clarification from the CEC on whether a CCA qualifies as an eligible applicant.

CEC Response: Yes, CCAs that are electricity generators are eligible entities. However, CCAs that do not fit into one of eligible entity categories must submit an [Eligibility Request Form](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021) and documentation of actual electricity sales from the last 1-2 years that, at minimum, detail the megawatt hour (MWh) sales to request approval from both the CEC and the U.S. Secretary of Energy before the application deadline. For more information, please see the response to [Question 1](#_Who_is_the).

#### Are there restrictions or guidelines for the role that CBOs can play in projects?

CEC Response: CBOs are intended to serve as guiding partners for engaging with a project’s intended community. The CBO and/or tribe should be closely partnered with the prime applicant to ensure that the benefits of clean, safe, affordable, and reliable energy are shared by all in the impacted community. The CBO must have an official mission or vision statement that expressly identifies serving disadvantaged and/or low-income communities. Also, the CBO must have experience deploying projects and/or outreach efforts within the proposed community’s region (i.e., air basin or county).

#### If a CBO does not contribute funding towards the project, does it still need to receive grant funding?

CEC Response: Yes, at least one CBO and/or tribal partner should be clearly identified and included as a compensated partner in the Budget Forms (Attachment 05) at the time of application. Also, an applicant must provide a commitment letter from a CBO and/or tribal partner outlining its contribution to developing and executing the project’s [Community Engagement Impact Plan](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/10109) and ensuring that the benefits of clean, safe, affordable, and reliable energy are shared by all impacted communities.

Please note that the Community Engagement Impact Plan deliverable is not required with the CERRI Program application.

#### Is a for-profit/small business battery developer an eligible “electricity storage operator” to apply for this solicitation?

CEC Response: An eligible electricity storage operator is an entity that manages and operates energy storage facilities to support the electric grid in California.

The CEC requires more information on what “battery developer” means in the context of this question to determine whether this entity would be eligible. If there is any doubt, please submit an eligibility request by filling out the [Eligibility Request Form](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021) and emailing it with documentation of your MWh sales over the past 1-2 years to the CEC at cerri@energy.ca.gov prior to the application deadline. The CEC and U.S. Secretary of Energy will consider the request for approval.

#### Is a startup company with no prior sales, or very limited prior sales, eligible to apply?

CEC Response: No, the Department of Energy (DOE) requires requests to include documentation of the entity’s actual MWh sales over the past 1-2 years to be approved as an eligible entity to apply for CERRI funding.

#### If entities wish to partner in an application, what is the largest amount or percentage of an award that a lead entity may subcontract to another entity?

CEC Response: There is no maximum dollar amount or percentage of requested CERRI funds that may be subcontracted to another entity. However, applicants will be evaluated under Scoring Criterion #2, “Project Management,” and projects that demonstrate the applicant’s direct involvement in completing tasks outlined in the Scope of Work (Attachment 03)–beyond solely managing subcontractors—will receive a higher score in this area.

#### Are entities that applied and were successful in Round 1 eligible to apply for Round 2?

CEC Response: Yes, entities that were successful in Round 1 are eligible to apply for Round 2. Entities are allowed to submit one application for each funding round.

#### If an applicant’s entity has already received approval in a previous round, will they continue to be eligible entities, or will they need to resubmit an Eligibility form?

CEC Response: Approved entities do not need to resubmit an eligibility request to be awarded eligibility for Round 2. Entities will continue to maintain their eligibility for future funding rounds if they were already approved by the CEC and DOE. However, the DOE may request proposed awardees to submit additional documentation verifying MWh sales.

## **Projects**

#### Will certain types of projects be more competitive than others (i.e., more grid hardening - new poles, undergrounding, substation improvements, etc. - vs. grid advancement - i.e., advanced technology, metering, remote monitoring, etc.)?

CEC Response: In accordance with the scoring criteria in Section VIII.F of the solicitation manual, all project types will be weighted based on how well the project addresses extreme weather risks to the community’s electric system and the extent to which the project advances California’s energy and resilience goals. There is no weighting preference that is solely based on one type of eligible activity versus another.

#### If we are submitting with a technology solution that is still securing all certification requirements, and all certifications would be secured by the time of any award, are we still eligible to submit with this technology? Or must all certifications be secured by the time of application submission?

CEC Response: All technology solutions that fit within the eligible activities list will be considered eligible for funding. However, a project that includes a technology that does not have certifications secured by time of application submission would be considered as having a lower level of project readiness compared to a project with a commercially ready technology, and this may negatively impact Scoring Criteria #1 “Project Merit, Needs, and Goals” and/or #2 “Project Management.”

Applications proposing projects with shorter lead times or demonstrating good progress in their environmental review processes will earn points under Scoring Criterion #2 “Project Management.”

#### Are any research and development expenses allowed in the project budget?

CEC Response: Research and development activities are not eligible activities under the CERRI program. They cannot be funded by the CERRI Program or used to satisfy the match requirement.

#### Please expand on system adaptive capacity.

CEC Response: The Department of Energy’s Grid Deployment Office defines system adaptive capacity for this program as “the ability of the electrical grid to continue supplying electricity where needed during disruptive events.” Per Bipartisan Infrastructure Law section 40101(a)(1), a disruptive event is “an event in which operations of the electric grid are disrupted, preventively shut off, or cannot operate safely due to extreme weather, wildfire, or a natural disaster.”

#### Do eligible activities that enhance system adaptive capacity include software solutions that coordinate existing Distributed Energy Resources (DER) assets, or must projects include deployment of physical assets?

CEC Response: Proposed projects that include software solutions for coordinating existing DER assets do not need to involve the deployment of physical assets. Examples may include, but are not limited to, dispatchable load flexibility during constrained grid conditions, ability to provide frequency support during power disruptions, and ability to black start during power outages to reduce outage duration and restoration time. In addition to DERs providing system adaptive capacity, monitoring technologies and control technologies are eligible activities that may have a software-heavy focus. According to Section I.B.3 of the solicitation manual, under “Eligible Activities,” the use or construction of distributed energy resources (DERs to enhance system adaptive capacity during electrical system outages is considered an eligible activity.

#### What is, and what is not, considered infrastructure and subject to Build America Buy America (BABA) requirements?

CEC Response: The Build America, Buy America Act, codified [under Code of Federal Regulations Title 2 Section 184.4 subsection (c),](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-I/part-184/section-184.4) states that “Infrastructure encompasses public infrastructure projects in the United States, which includes, at a minimum, the structures, facilities, and equipment for…

* electrical transmission facilities and systems;
* utilities;
* buildings and real property;
* and structures, facilities, and equipment that generate, transport, and distribute energy...”

The BABA Requirement only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or permanently affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought into the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a BABA Requirement apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of the structure or permanently affixed to the infrastructure project.

#### I see that new solar photovoltaic generation is not eligible, but would battery installation with required utility upgrades for an existing solar microgrid (tribal lands) be eligible?

CEC Response: Yes. Upgrades to existing infrastructure, including solar microgrids, are eligible under the CERRI Program.

As per the Section I.B.3 of solicitation manual, “Eligible Activities,” the “Use or construction of distributed energy resources for enhancing system adaptive capacity during electrical system outages, including microgrids and battery storage subcomponents,” is an eligible activity. The CERRI Program is designed to enhance the energy reliability or resilience of grid-connected communities; therefore, microgrids must be interconnected to satisfy the requirement of enhancement of system adaptive capacity. The DOE’s Grid Deployment Office has defined system adaptive capacity for purposes of this program as “the ability of the electrical grid to continue to supply electricity where needed during disruptive events.”

#### Is establishing a microgrid an eligible activity for CERRI funding?

CEC Response: A microgrid project, including microgrid subcomponents such as battery storage, switchgear components, and inverters, is eligible for CERRI Program funding as long as the project budget excludes new generation (e.g., solar photovoltaics and diesel gensets). The microgrid may have existing generation, but any new generation must be funded independent of the CERRI project scope and cannot be attributed as match funds. The microgrid must be designed for system adaptive capacity (e.g., ability to function during outages and respond to grid needs during disruptions). Peak demand shaving cannot be its sole function, but load flexibility may be a secondary benefit to the primary function of system adaptive capacity. See response to [Question 17](#_I_see_that) for more information on the definition of system adaptive capacity.

Please note that new generation (i.e., solar photovoltaic panels) may be a part of a CERRI project but that it cannot be funded by the CERRI Program or used to satisfy the match requirement associated with the program. Ineligible activities included in a project may be included in application attachments such as the Project Narrative (Attachment 02) but cannot be included in an applicant’s Budget Forms (Attachment 05). Please note that any i activities included in the project and listed on the Scope of Work (Attachment 03) will be subject to all federal funding requirements, including Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, Davis-Bacon Act, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance.

#### Could you please confirm whether battery storage systems are eligible for funding under this program?

CEC Response: Battery storage can be funded under the CERRI Program if it enhances the electric system’s adaptive capacity during outages. Please see response to [Question 18](#_Is_establishing_a) for more information on system adaptive capacity and eligibility of microgrid components.

#### Would Residential Battery Storage project be considered eligible?

CEC Response: Please see response to [Question 19](#_Could_you_please).

#### I did not see any specific mention of developing Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) or disaster preparedness planning. Given the critical nature of these plans in maintaining continuity of operations during emergencies, I wanted to inquire whether this grant would allow the use of funds to hire consulting services to develop a comprehensive EOP.

CEC Response: CERRI Program funds awarded through the GFO-23-312r2 may be used for EOPs or disaster preparedness planning. However, it is important to note that these tasks must be paired with one of the eligible activities specified in the solicitation manual for Round 2 and that funding cannot be solely dedicated to EOPs or disaster preparedness planning. Instead, these plans must be part of and inform a larger project and meet CERRI Program objectives to deploy grid-hardening and grid resilience projects that strengthen and modernize California’s power grid against wildfires, extreme weather, and other natural disasters.

#### Can applicants submit a CERRI funding application for a project component that is part of an already awarded contract but not funded by that contract? The contract included a placeholder for the project component that we are considering submitting under this CERRI round. Our question concerns the timing of the contract award. Since the contract was awarded outside the grant's official period, would this affect the eligibility of the component we wish to submit? For context, the work on this component will be performed during the grant period.

CEC Response: If the proposed project component meets the eligibility criteria listed in Section I.B.3 of the solicitation manual ([GFO-23-312r2](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-05/gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment)) and all related work and CERRI/match expenditures are completed during the agreement term, the timing of the previous contract award will not impact the component’s eligibility for CERRI funding.

If a pre-existing project can clearly demonstrate a need for funding, such as showing that its expansion would not be possible without securing CERRI grant funding or that the timeline for the project’s expansion will be delayed without this funding, it will earn points under Scoring Criterion #1 “Project Merit, Need, and Goals.”

Please note that all activities included within the broader project, including those not funded by the CERRI Program, must comply with the CEC and the DOE Terms and Conditions for the project to be approved by the DOE and awarded funding. This includes adhering to the BABA Act and the Davis-Bacon Act, as well as completing any necessary reviews under the NEPA.

For more information, the CERRI Program Terms and Conditions can be found on the [CERRI Program](https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri-program) webpage.

* [CERRI Federal Subaward Terms and Conditions](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9024)
* [CERRI CEC-Specific Subaward Terms and Conditions](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9025)
* [CERRI Special Terms and Conditions for Tribes](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9503)
* [CERRI Bankruptcy Terms and Conditions](https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/10963)

#### The CERRI solicitation manual states that funding is not available for “construction of new transmission lines,” but what if a substation is being built as a replacement to an existing facility that improves grid resiliency?

CEC Response: As determined by the IIJA Section 40101(d) bill language, the CERRI Program can fund the construction of replacement substations to improve grid resiliency. However, the CERRI Program cannot fund new infrastructure or expansions of the electric system.

#### Can an application include the cost of transformers in its budget?

CEC Response: Applicants may include transformers in their budgets to support eligible activities planned for their proposed projects. Transformers can be funded through this solicitation with CERRI funding or counted as match funds.

Please note that all purchases and activities included within the project must comply with the CEC and the DOE Terms and Conditions for the project to be approved by the DOE and awarded funding. This includes adhering to the eligible activities requirement, BABA Act, and Davis-Bacon Act, as well as completing any necessary reviews under the NEPA.

For more information on Terms and Conditions, please see the response to [Question 22](#_Can_applicants_submit).

# Funding

#### Is the funding for the CERRI Program secured? Or can it be affected by the potential Federal and State budget cuts? Especially given the fact that the funds are coming from the IIJA.

CEC Response: Current guidance is that Years 1-3 funding, which has been awarded and has signed contracts in place, should be secure. The CEC intends to apply for Years 4 & 5 funding if it becomes available. The CEC does not have additional information beyond what has been publicly released at this time on the impact of funds coming from IIJA and the legislative budget under development. We will send email notices and updates on the program and status of funding once we receive further information.

*Funding for all proposed projects from this solicitation is contingent upon approval by the DOE, approval by the CEC during a publicly noticed CEC business meeting, and the execution of a grant agreement.*

#### There is a requirement that sets a maximum spending limit to qualify for the grant. If our qualifying sub-project is part of a larger project that exceeds that limit, would we still be eligible? Or would we need to separate the sub-project to meet the criteria and apply?

CEC Response: The total cost of the larger project will not impact the eligibility of the sub-project for CERRI funding, provided that the applicant submits the sub-project separately. Only the eligible activities related to the sub-project should be clearly listed and defined in an application’s Scope of Work (Attachment 03) and Budget Forms (Attachment 05).

For clarification, the Maximum Award listed under “Funding,” Section I.C of the solicitation manual, is the maximum amount of CERRI funding an applicant can request for its project in a funding round. This corresponds to the Grand Total Energy Commission Reimbursable Share as listed in an application’s Budget Forms (Attachment 05).

#### Are there restrictions on activities that can be considered as match?

CEC Response: CERRI and match funding may only be used for the eligible activities listed in Section I.B.3 of the solicitation manual. Activities outside of this list will not be eligible for CERRI or match funding.

#### Can the match be from prior years ea. 2023/2024, or does it need to be for the term of the agreement?

CEC Response: No CERRI or match funds can be spent before the grant agreement, with a limited exception of the use of match funds for permitting and environmental review after the CEC posts the Notice of Letter of Intent to fund. Other sources of federal funding (e.g., Federal Emergency Management Agency funding) and CEC funding (e.g., Electric Program Investment Charge funding) cannot be used as match funding. The intent of this program is to fund projects that would not otherwise occur without grant funding.

#### Are there any updates regarding the status of Round 2 of the CERRI Program, given the announcement of its delay. Additionally, the Round 1 awardees were announced - please confirm whether this award is secure or if there is any risk to its status?

CEC Response: The CEC temporarily paused its release of Round 2 funding while awaiting further guidance from the DOE. Communication with the DOE has since resumed, and the program remains operational. For more information, please see the response to [Question 23](#_The_CERRI_solicitation).

Based on the results of the CERRI Round 1 solicitation, which can be accessed [here](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-312-community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri), four proposals were recommended for awards and received Letters of Intent from CEC to provide funding pending federal approval of the project. Two Round 1 applicants selected and recommended for funding by the CEC have since received project approval by DOE’s Grid Deployment Office for a federal award. The CERRI team is awaiting federal approval of two more projects. Once approved by the DOE, the projects then move on to the Notice of Proposed Award phase.

Funding of all proposed projects from this solicitation is contingent upon approval at a publicly noticed CEC business meeting and execution of a grant agreement. If the CEC is unable to timely negotiate and execute a funding agreement with an applicant, the CEC, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to cancel or modify the pending award and award the funds to another applicant.

# Application Requirements

#### Will applicants be required to provide vendor quotes with their applications even if the project has not yet been bid out?

CEC Response: Vendor quotes are required for equipment purchases over $50,000 (and cumulative purchases exceeding that, even if the unit cost is lower) and project-related work with a total cost of $250,000 or more. This may include but is not limited to quotes for box connections, cable, conduit, fittings, protectors, transformers, and “various” budget items. The CEC requires these items with the initial application package for several reasons, including justification of costs and assurance that the project is largely shovel-ready and can be deployed within the required project and funding timeline. Vendor quotes are also required by the DOE for federal project review and approval.

Applicants are not required to use the vendors from which they solicited quotes for their applications. The applications must include quotes to justify budget expenses, but awardees may ultimately choose to use separate vendors or equipment suppliers after the project has been awarded. If an applicant cannot obtain current vendor quotes for the projects, they may submit historical vendor quotes, obtained within the past 3 years, for budget items as placeholders while waiting for updated quotes.

#### Do Davis-Bacon requirements apply to workforce development trainees who may contribute labor to physical projects as part of their hands-on training?

CEC Response: Yes, Davis-Bacon Act requirements apply to workforce development trainees who contribute labor and perform construction, alteration, or repair on projects funded by the CERRI Program.

#### Can you confirm how you are calculating match, specifically on large entity projects where it is 115%. Is that of total project costs?

CEC Response: To determine the match requirement for projects under Group 1: Large Entities, take the total amount of CERRI funds requested (listed as the Energy Commission Reimbursable Share in Budget Forms Attachment 05), and multiply it by the required match percentage of 1.15. For example, a Group 1 applicant requesting $20M in CERRI funding will need to provide $23M in match funding.

Conversely, to calculate the match share percentage an application is committing to a project, take the match share amount listed in the application’s Budget Forms (Attachment 05), and divide it by the total amount of CERRI funds requested. Then, multiply the result by 100 to obtain the final match percentage. For example, if a Group 1 applicant plans to provide $25M in match funding and is requesting $20M in CERRI funding, then the applicant is proposing 125% match.

Match can include cash or in-kind contributions provided by the applicant, subcontractor, or other entities contributing to the project. Applicants are required to list their match share in the Budget Forms (Attachment 05) and provide corresponding commitment letters with their applications. Even if match funding is provided by the applicant directly, it must be documented in a commitment letter and the proposed project budget. Match funding commitment letters must clearly outline the source of funds, provide a justification for the amount (including any in-kind contributions), assure the availability of these funds, and present a strategy for replacing any lost funds. Commitment letters submitted after the application deadline will not be considered during scoring.

# Miscellaneous

#### Where can we find the recording for the Pre-Application Workshop for the Round 2 grant funding opportunity (GFO-23-312r2) presentation?

CEC Response: The presentation recording and slides are posted on the event webpage (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/event/funding-workshop/2025-05/pre-application-workshop-gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy>) and linked on the CERRI Program webpage (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri-program>). The slides were also posted to the CERRI Program docket (22-ERDD-01) here: <https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Lists/DocketLog.aspx?docketnumber=22-ERDD-01>.

#### Can you send a list of participants in the recent workshop on the CERRI Program?

CEC Response: The CEC no longer posts attendee lists online. To request the attendee list, please submit a Public Records Act request. For more information, visit <https://www.energy.ca.gov/contact/public-records-act-requests>.

If you are looking to find a project partner, we encourage you to join Empower Innovation, an online platform created by the CEC for the cleantech community. This platform offers networking opportunities for individuals and organizations exploring funding options. The “Find a Partner” feature allows you to express your interest in specific funding opportunities and view other participants who are also looking for potential partners. The Empower Innovation webpage for the second round of CERRI Program grant funding is available here: <https://www.empowerinnovation.net/en/custom/funding/view/47088>.

#### Where can we find projects that were funded in the previous wave/round? Are they good projects to look to for guidance?

CEC Response: The CERRI Program released its first funding round (Round 1) under the [solicitation GFO-23-312](https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2024-03/gfo-23-312-community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment-cerri) on March 28, 2024. On December 12, 2024, the CEC announced its intent to fund four projects under Round 1 in a Notice of Letters of Intent. A Notice of Proposed Awards for each DOE-approved project will be released on the CERRI Round 1 solicitation webpage with the final grant funding and match funding amounts. During the CEC business meeting, presentations will provide an overview of each Round 1 project proposed for an award. Project Scopes of Work will be included in the CEC Business Meeting materials. Once the grant awards are approved and executed at a CEC business meeting, the public will gain access to supporting documentation for each project, including the Budget and Project Schedule.

The projects selected in Round 1 were chosen because they met all program requirements and received the highest scores based on the established evaluation criteria. While these projects can serve as helpful examples for potential applicants, we strongly recommend reviewing the Application Manual and aligning proposals with the scoring criteria, as these remain the most reliable guides for developing a competitive application.

#### For the eligibility request form, will any of the approvals be made public, or will they be handled privately with each entity?

CEC Response: CEC will notify entities about the status of their eligibility requests in private through email. However, this information is accessible to the public through a [Public Records Act Request](https://www.energy.ca.gov/contact/public-records-act-requests).

#### Is the posted eligibility request form up to date? I ask because it appears to have last been updated in November 2023.

CEC Response: The Eligibility Request Form (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/media/9021>) has been updated. Any future changes or updates to the form will be uploaded to the linked website. Older versions of the form will also be accepted for review.

#### What are the next steps to initiate an application?

CEC Response: Applicants can submit their applications for the solicitation, GFO-23-312r2, through the Energy Commission Agreement Management System (ECAMS) website at <https://ecams.energy.ca.gov>. For more information about application and project requirements, including formatting and page limit details, please review the solicitation manual, posted at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2025-05/gfo-23-312r2-round-2-community-energy-reliability-and-resilience-investment>.

For instructions on how to apply using the ECAMS system, please see the How to Apply document available on the CEC website at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-resources>, under General Funding Information, Energy Commission Agreement Management System (ECAMS). First time users must register as a new user to access the system. There will be two types of user accounts to establish: 1) an organizational account for the entity applying to the solicitation; and 2) user accounts for individuals who will be submitting the application on behalf of the organization. For questions related to the submission of applications in the ECAMS system, please contact ECAMS.SalesforceSupport@energy.ca.gov.

Additionally, for the CERRI Program’s second round of funding, CEC staff will be providing ‘soft’ technical assistance to eligible entities with the following tasks:

* + Reviewing application attachments for completeness and compliance with DOE and CEC project requirements.
	+ Reviewing the eligibility of proposed project activities.
	+ Providing clarification on whether proposed costs can be funded by CERRI Program or match funds.
	+ Assisting applicants in identifying the necessary federal forms, waivers, and documents to submit with their applications for DOE review.

To request technical assistance during the application phase, please contact CERRI@energy.ca.gov with the name of a primary contact and a brief description of the specific assistance you need. Technical assistance requests will be answered based on a first-come, first-served basis. The due date for technical assistance requests is August 1, 2025. We encourage applicants to submit requests early to give us enough time to accommodate them. If CEC staff cannot provide the requested assistance, we will indicate this in an email response.