

## NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) # IFA-GRID-01

### 40101(d) Federal Formula Grant Funding: Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid

#### Questions & Answers

##### 1. Where can I find more information?

Further information can be found at the IFA/CB website at <https://www.il-fa.com/programs/grid>  
(Dated: 5.17.2024)

For more information on GATA Grantee Portal, how to register and how to apply through the Portal, please go to <https://gata.illinois.gov/grantee/grantee-portal-faq.html>  
(Dated: 6.5.2024)

##### 2. Who should I contact if I have questions about this NOFO?

Contact Claire Brinley, IFA/CB Policy Analyst  
Phone: 312-651-1319  
Email: [federal\\_funding@il-fa.com](mailto:federal_funding@il-fa.com)  
(Dated: 5.17.2024)

##### 3. What Cost Match am I required to provide?

If the applicant sells more than 4,000,000 megawatt-hours (“MWh”) per year (Large Utility), the applicant will have to commit to match 115% of all federal funds received for the project.

If the applicant sells not more than 4,000,000 MWh (Small Utility), the applicant will commit to match one-third + 15% of all federal funds received for the project.

Grant funds distributed to eligible entities that do not have sales of electricity would qualify toward the overall required cost match of 115% of all federal funds received for the project.

**Example:** if you are requesting \$1 million in federal funding for your project, and

**You are a Small Utility:** you must provide a non-federal cost match of \$150,000 (15%) plus \$333,333 (1/3) for your project, so your total cost match would be \$483,333.

**You are a Large Utility or any other Eligible Entity that is not a Small Utility:** you must provide a non-federal cost match of \$1,150,000 (115%).

Only costs associated with the Eligible Activities indicated in this NOFO can be counted towards the sub-awardee cost match.

(Dated: 5.17.2024)

**4. What is SAM.gov and UEI registration process?**

SAM.gov is a two-step process. First, you sign up for the UEI and second, you register your entity. When you are registering in the GATA Grantee Portal, you will be asked to enter your UEI. Please enter the UEI that you have received for your entity. Once the registration in SAM.gov is active, the GATA system will update to reflect this that typically happens overnight.

(Dated: 6.5.2024)

**5. Can a non-profit that serves small utilities apply for the benefit of those small utilities and provide only the small utility match?**

Unless an entity sells electricity, it will not qualify as a small utility as per the US DOE requirements and will have to match 115% of the funding requested. If a small utility applies, it will only have to match 48% for every dollar requested. But since selling electricity is a key part of the requirement to qualify as a small utility under the DOE requirements, any entity that does not sell electricity cannot qualify as a small utility.

Under the DOE funding guidance, a non-profit does not qualify as an "Eligible Entity" (see the list of eligible entities in the NOFO) without a special decision of the DOE Secretary. The only way for a non-profit to be able to receive funding under this opportunity is if the Secretary of Energy grants determination that this entity qualifies as the "Other Relevant Entity" which is processed on a case-by-case basis with the review of the proposed project and entity's role in it. But to receive that determination, IFA will first have to file the request with the Secretary with all the details of a proposed project.

Therefore, any entity that does not fit within the "Eligible Entity" category but can potentially qualify as "Other Relevant Entity" can still file the pre-application as described in the NOFO and if the project is pre-selected by IFA, the next step of the application process will include IFA filing a request for the Secretary of Energy's determination for that specific entity in that specific project.

Thus, such entity shall indicate in their pre-application why it should qualify as the "Other Relevant Entity". After the pre-selection process, IFA will be working with the selected projects to go through the next steps of the process, including getting the US DOE Secretary determination and DOE pre-approval for each selected project.

(Answered: 6.5.2024)

**6. What types of projects are eligible if the "new electricity" projects are not included? If a local unit of government is interested in building resilience for at-risk neighborhoods/housing that may be more affected by a power outage, can battery storage infrastructure be purchased to maintain power of a community center in the area, so residents have somewhere to go if heat/cold were a danger to health? Similarly, could battery storage units be purchased and installed in conjunction with owners of rural grocery stores, to prevent creation of food deserts in less urban areas, during an extended outage?**

Construction of distributed energy resources, including battery storage and microgrids, is an eligible activity as long as they are "for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events."

And, similarly, construction of a new electric generating facility or large-scale battery-storage facility is not an eligible activity if it is "not used for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events."

Therefore, this type of activity may be eligible but, in your pre-application, you need to explain how the new electric generating facility or the energy storage facility will be used for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events, and particularly noting the following funding priorities related to the resilience hubs:

Priority projects noted in the NOFO include:

**Community Resilience Hubs.** Resilience investments to support ensuring reliable power for community gathering places that can provide life-essential or other support services to communities during extreme weather and grid-related events.

**Critical Facility Microgrids.** Resilience investments to support ensuring reliable power for essential public services that serve large populations that would pose risks to public health & safety if they lost power for extended durations.

**Community-Driven Initiatives.** Comprehensive efforts that address resilience needs of a community, that is driven by local community planning efforts.

Program Objectives section of the NOFO notes that this funding opportunity is designed, among other, to provide a reliable power infrastructure to all communities to have access to affordable, reliable, and clean electricity, focusing on: "Reliability and resiliency improvements in Equity Investment Eligible Communities (EIECs) and federally designated Justice40 Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) that align with potential climate change impacts."

In the Subaward Objectives section of the NOFO, the Resilience and Equity objectives indicate that some of the desired outcomes of this funding include:

- Improved community resilience for those least able to respond to disruptions.
- Increased access and opportunities for residents and businesses in EIECs and DACs.
- Increased diverse contractor/subcontractor participation in professional services, subcontracting, and prime contracting opportunities.
- Aligned demographics of contractors/subcontractors to the demographics of the state.
- Increased awareness and trust in the energy system in frontline communities.
- Support communities and small utilities that lack the capacity to plan for and invest in resiliency.

(Answered: 6.5.2024)