

EECBG Q&A Round 3

August 30, 2024

Q1: We would love to consider applying for funding but probably will not be able to pull an application together in the short amount of time remaining before the August 9th deadline. Is there any possibility of extending the deadline?

A1: The Department has issued the EECBG application for a second round of applications, due to PSD by 4:30 p.m. on September Monday 23, 2024.

Q2: The Selectboard asked me at our meeting this week to clarify if equipment for an L2 EV charger would be an appropriate use of this grant money. It is clear that money received from this grant cannot be used for construction, but can it be used for the actual equipment - i.e. a charger and software?

A2: EV charging equipment, which would require installation services of laborers or mechanics (e.g., a licensed electrician/contractor), is not eligible under the PSD EECBG RFP. Software is not considered infrastructure and may be purchased.

Q3: May grant funds be used toward the assessment, procurement, and installation of solar panels and compatible heating system on/ for municipal buildings?

A3: No, these are not eligible activities under PSD's EECBG RFP.

Q4: Presently the Water/ Wastewater Department has one old and one new pick-up truck which are both fossil fuel. As we look to decrease energy consumption, we would like to switch the small fleet to electric vehicles where appropriate. We are not classified as a disadvantaged community (however we hear residents feel tax stressed and stretched).

Would the purchase of an electric pick-up truck for the town's water/wastewater department be appropriate for this grant?

A4: Purchase of qualified electric vehicles is an allowable activity under Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy.

Regarding not being a disadvantaged community: This DOE provision asks that 40% of all federal resources in a state be distributed to communities that meet the requirements for Disadvantaged Communities. PSD will review all applications submitted and attempt to meet the EJ40 distribution requirements.

Q5: There is language in the RFP indicating that "activities proposed for this RFP must be distinct from those that municipalities may already be undertaking in conjunction with projects being scoped under

the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) at BGS." Does this restriction apply to activities that have been supported with Mini-MERP grants?

A5: The restrictive language in the EECBG RFP relates to municipalities that anticipate or have received MERP grant support to purchase and/or install energy improvement equipment for public facilities, which would include the deployment of laborers or mechanics in service of such projects or purchases. These are not eligible under the PSD EECBG RFP. In addition, such activities would potentially be considered "connected actions" by US DOE and therefore subject to NEPA terms as described in the RFP. If a municipal project funded under MERP includes changes or alterations to public facilities and would involve laborers or mechanics, then any activity related to this project would not qualify under the PSD EECBG program. However, if a municipality has received or will receive mini-MERP funding, and the activities planned under either mini-MERP or EECBG funding do not entail changes or alterations to public facilities that require laborers or mechanics, do not disturb the ground or alter an historic building, and comply with Build America Buy America provisions, then a PSD EECBG program application would be allowed.

Q6: How about using these funds to try to get as many of our high energy burdened towns who need a truck -- an electric one, like the F-150 Lightning, that also has the added bonus of a bidirectional battery, which could be used as back up power for emergencies. A mobile battery...that could power a building or (emergency response) site.

I wondered if PSD is able to take the lead in crafting something that would look more like a bulk-purchasing of these vehicles and getting them out there based on need/transp. energy burden/recent flooding/etc. at the local level.

A6: PSD cannot participate in any kind of bulk purchasing activity as suggested. The Department can only issue grant awards to eligible municipalities per the requirements set forth in DOE's prime EECBG award to PSD. However, other entities (e.g., regional planning commissions) may be able to craft grant proposals or grant application templates that individual municipalities or groups of municipalities may submit on their own.

Q7: Our town really needs a flood resilience plan and I'd like to know how I can get this application submitted immediately.

A7: The US Department of Energy stated that planning projects focused solely on flood resiliency would not be an eligible use of EECBG Program funds. Flood resilience planning by itself does not align with any of the eligibility categories.

Q8: Category 7 mentions that purchase of electric or hybrid fleet vehicles is an eligible use of funds. Could that include an electric vehicle for town staff to commute while at work? Or just larger fleet vehicles like those listed such as buses or trucks?

Also, would an EV charger be an eligible purchase on its own?

A8: DOE guidelines state that “Conservation of transportation fuel may be for the population (e.g., privately owned vehicles) within the jurisdiction of the eligible entity or for government purposes (e.g., *government fleets*).” Thus, if an electric vehicle to be obtained with EECBG funds will replace a fossil fueled vehicle owned as part of a *municipal fleet*, and this switch to an electric vehicle conserves transportation fuel, then this would be an eligible use of funds.

Note that electric vehicle charging equipment that requires the work of laborers or mechanics to be installed (e.g., a licensed electrician/contractor) is not eligible under the PSD EECBG RFP.