COMMERCE DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Questions & Answers

Minnesota Electric Grid Resilience Grant Program (EGRG)

RFP Reference Number: COMM-STATE01-20240916

Response Date 9/27/2024**,** 10/15/2024, 11/01/2024, **11/13/2024**

#	Question	Response	Date Responded
	SECTION I. GRANT OVERVIEW		
	A. Purpose		
	B. Funding Availability		
1.	What is the available funding?	A total of $5,300,000.00 is available for the Minnesota State Electric Grid Resilience Grant program with a maximum award of $250,000.00 per application to eligible entities.	9/27/2024
	SECTION II. PRIORITIES IN GRANTMAKING		
2.	What are the cost match requirements?	There are no match requirements for the Minnesota State Electric Grid Resilience Grant program.	9/27/2024
3.	If the program is oversubscribed, will Commerce consider offering partial grants (or a "haircut") or will it be an outright yes/no for the entire application? E.g. if there are two phases to a project with an ask of $XX and the program is oversubscribed, would Commerce allow for just one to be accepted at $X?	Commerce encourages applicants to apply with multiple applications with labeling each with its priority. If the program is oversubscribed, yes, Commerce will consider offering partial grants. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis based on the evaluation process.	9/27/2024
	SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY		
	SECTION IV. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS		
4.	I looked at the referenced RFP link and I'm not finding much background on the criteria that should be addressed in an application for these Electric Grid Resilience Grants.	• Criteria is weighted on the Competitive Priorities. Legislation lists that the project must meet the resilience definition and may meet the preferred program goals listed as carbon-free and strategic electrification. Refer to the program requirements and its statues. • The State Electric Grid Resilience Grants program's criteria is based off State Legislation Chapter 60, HF 2310. The requirement of the law is for the Commerce Commissioner to report to members of legislation, at	9/27/2024

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		minimum, the grant awarded in most recent calendar year and remaining balance of the appropriation.	
5.	Are the applications subject to a board approved DEI policy at the utility/cooperative/municipal? I have a number of clients that have yet to prepare such a policy and am looking from some direction from the state as to whether or not this would be a requirement for being awarded a grant. If labor is omitted and the application is for material costs only are Davis-Beacon requirements waved. Similarly, if a DEI policy is required when requesting funding for labor costs, are the DEI requirements also waved if no funding for labor is requested/included in the application	• The applicants are not subjected to approval of a DEI policy. An applicant who shows benefits to diverse or underserved populations is subject to 5 points as the application is being evaluated based on a 100-point system under the Competitive Priorities section. • State Electric Grid Resilience program is not subject to Federal Award Administration and Reporting Requirements such as NEPA, BABA and Davis-Bacon Act. • Program requirements may be based on what is in the budget. The applicant may not have to comply to anything beyond what is started in section 4.3 of the Sample Grant Contract.	9/27/2024
6.	Can program funding be used on projects in progress with an in-service date before June 30, 2028? a. If yes, please confirm whether funding can be used to recover expenses incurred.	Costs for this project cannot be incurred until a grant contract agreement has been signed by all parties. Grant funds will be issued on a reimbursement basis according to the invoice template provided. Supporting documentation is required for all expenses. Further guidance will be provided to all grantees.	11/1/2024
7.	Can program funding be applied to long-term agreements, e.g. energy storage agreements or other contractual agreements? a. If yes, can the proposal be written to cover a full year of costs not exceeding $250,000 or is it preferred to write the proposal for reimbursement over the program's period of performance?	Yes, you may propose using the funds for long-term agreements. The legislation requires that reimbursement of funding of the project cannot go past June 30, 2028.	11/1/2024
	SECTION V. COMPETATIVE PRIORITIES		
	A. Organization and Project Readiness		
8.	Should the Applicant Approval Letter and the Confirmation of Funding Commitment Letter be the same letter or two separate documents? The RFP seems to imply that it should be the same	It could be the same letter, especially if the same person is signing the Applicant Approval and Confirmation of Funding Commitment letters together. One can upload the dual-purpose letter in both upload fields.	10/15/2024

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	letter, but the portal has two distinct upload fields, one for each letter.		
9.	Can you explain a bit more about the purpose of the funding commitment letter and what should be included? Is that to be used only if an organization decides they want to pay for part of the project costs? And is it required for all organizations, even those who will be proposing to have the full cost of the project covered by grant funding?	Should a responder be selected for award, the grant agreement will be established as reimbursement of approved expenses. Grantees will incur expenses and will submit for reimbursement via invoices of work done or material purchased on monthly or quarterly basis. The Confirmation of Funding Commitment Letter is to ensure that the funding of the full project can be covered up front by the entity until reimbursed by allotted reward. This is required of all funding recipients.	10/15/2024
	B. Project Approach and Design to Grid Resilience		
10.	Can you provide clarification about what you would like submitted as "project design with scale and legend"? Are you looking for full, final engineering design drawings or more preliminary/conceptual drawings? For projects currently in preliminary planning stages it is unclear how much detail is presently available or is required to fulfill this requirement.	The grant application should include a preliminary/conceptional plan or final engineering design drawings.	11/1/2024
	C. Efforts toward Environmental Justice Areas and Local Benefits		
	D. Project Cost, Material Quantities and Labor Detail		
11.	In the detail of labor costs, is fringe costs included in the labor?	Include per hour labor costs and fringe costs per worker.	9/27/2024
12.	Does the grant proposal need to include labor & fringe, or can we request funding for equipment only? We recognize that the $250,000 will not cover the cost of the project, including labor, so it doesn't seem reasonable to include that data unless it is required to demonstrate what percentage of the total project cost the grant funding will cover.	Applications will be reviewed for the steps and associated costs of the project, regardless of the funding source. The evaluation will include project feasibility and needs/issues addressed.	11/13/2024
	VI. GRANT APPLICATION LIST OF QUESTIONS		

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13.	What is the application deadline?	Applications must be complete and submitted, including exhibits and attachments, before 5:00pm Central Time on November 19, 2024.	9/27/2024
	VII. QUESTIONS		
14.	With material lead times February contract execution could push work out. If awarded, is it possible to execute the contract sooner than the anticipated date?	Upon notification of award, Commerce will work with the grantees to negotiate the final scope of work and budget. Work cannot begin, nor can costs be incurred, until the agreement has been fully executed.	11/1/2024
	VIII. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS		
	IX. EVALUATION AND SCORING		
	X. NOTIFICATIONS		
	XI. EXHIBITS AND ATTACHMENTS		
15.	Exhibit G and H are required, should this be Exhibit G or H required? If the applicant is a nonprofit, do you still require Exhibit H included but filled out as “not applicable.”	Apologies for any confusion. Applicants need to complete Exhibit G ***OR*** Exhibit H, whichever is appropriate.	11/1/2024
16.	Regarding Exhibit A, State of MN Agreement Template, can Commerce clarify the "services and/or materials" referenced in the in the first line of section 4.3.1? For example, do the cost ranges for "services and/or materials" refer to the cost of the entire project, or to the unit price of each piece of equipment, or perhaps for costs associated with all units of one piece of equipment (i.e. 10 regulators)?	Clause 4.3 are the requirements applying to nongovernmental organizations for any services and/or materials the grantee procures, depending on the total amount of the services/materials. Clause 4.3.1 Requires grantees to undergo a formal solicitation, including public notice and bidding process, for any subcontracts it seeks where the total project cost for the work sought is $100K or more.	11/1/2024
	XII. TIMELINE		
17.	Are you planning an additional webinar for this program?	Yes, please watch GovDelivery or the Electric Grid Resilience website for updates: Electric Grid Resilience Program / Minnesota Department of Commerce - Energy (mn.gov)	9/27/2024

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18.	If a design plan (from page 8, section B, question 9) is currently undergoing drafting by an engineering firm, would that count as execution of the work prior to the start date? The actual implementation would not start prior to the grant contract, but the drafting of the design plan would by requirement. Is this okay?	Any work done before the grant is awarded and fully executed cannot be expensed for reimbursement. Drafting the design plan now is fine, but this work cannot be submitted for reimbursement by a grantee.	11/1/2024
	XIII. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS		
19.	Electric cooperatives hold a not-for-profit tax status that is different from a non-profit tax status. Is the requirement to provide Voter Registration services applicable to electric cooperatives if awarded a State Electric Grid Resilience grant? Does the electric cooperative's Form 990 need to be submitted with the application?	Legal review of this question determined that Minn. Stat. § 201.162 would not be applicable to recipients of grid resiliency grants. In other words, the voter registration services requirement does not apply to electric cooperatives for the State Electric Grid Resilience grant program. Non-profit grant applicants may be required to submit the following documents, as applicable to the organization and as required by 16B.981 Subd. 2 (2) and Subd. 2 (5) as part of the pre-award risk assessment: • Most recent 990 or Form 990-EZ filed with the IRS • If not in existence long enough or not required to file Form 990, Form 990 EZ or most recent audit, the nonprofit grant applicant must: - Demonstrate exemption – i.e. Provide a copy of the IRS determination letter - Submit the most recent set of board-reviewed (or managing group if applicable) financial statements • Most recent audit as required, under Section 309.53, Subdivision 3	9/27/2024