



Energy Improvement in Rural or Remote Areas

Program Overview: The Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (ERA) program is releasing this funding opportunity to provide funding for small (under \$5 million) clean energy projects which benefit rural and remote communities in the United States.


Deadlines: July 13, 2023 at 5pm ET: Pre-Application due | October 12, 2023 at 5pm ET: Full Application due

Eligible Applicants: Applications must identify at least one city, town, or unincorporated area in the United States (including U.S. territories) with a population of not more than 10,000 that benefits from the proposed energy improvement. The applicant and subrecipient(s) must be domestic entities.


Program Objectives



Improving overall cost-effectiveness of energy generation, transmission, or distribution systems




Siting or upgrading transmission and distribution lines




Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from renewable energy generation, such as solar, hydropower, or geothermal



Increasing energy efficiency



Providing or modernizing electric generation facilities, substations, or other electric infrastructure



Developing rural or remote microgrids, both generation and energy storage

Anticipated Type of Award: Fixed Amount Grant. This grant mechanism provides milestone-based payments and significantly reduces financial reporting requirements associated with larger DOE awards. Additionally, technical assistance is available support the initial development of project concepts.

Anticipated Award Size and Funding Amount

Topic Area No.	Topic Area Title	Anticipated Number of Awards	Anticipated Cost Share per Award		Total Anticipated Fed Share
			Award Size (Fed Share)	Applicant Share	
1	Community-Driven Clean Energy Projects	10-100	\$500K - \$5M	\$0	\$50M

This FOA does not require applicant cost share.

PRE-APPLICATION TEMPLATE

Pre-Application Template

How to Apply:

1. Review the funding opportunity announcement to ensure you comply with all eligibility requirements and to gain an understanding of full application requirements and terms and conditions associated with the award..
2. Download this template and fill in answers to each question below to complete your pre-application. The pre-application must be less than 10 pages. Suggested word count is included in italics before each bracket.
3. Optional: Request technical assistance to support initial development of project concepts. Technical assistance can be requested from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) [here](#).
4. Submit the pre-application on OCED Exchange by the deadline noted above. Applications will be reviewed according to criteria in Section 5.1.1 of the Funding Opportunity Announcement. Based on the results of the review, DOE will invite some applicants to submit a full application.
5. Begin the registration process for the System for Award Management (SAM) and Unique Entity Identifies (UEI). See Section 4.2.2 of the FOA for more information or review additional resources here: [GSAFSD Tier 0 Knowledge Base - Validating your Entity](#).
6. If you are invited to submit a full application, review Section 4.5.2 of the Funding Opportunity Announcement for full application requirements. Note that NREL and other national labs will provide additional technical assistance to support full application development.

Application Information

1) Applicant Information:

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

2) Project Title

3) Project Location

A. City, state, and zip code of community or communities benefitting from the proposed project:

B. Population of community (must be less than 10,000 inhabitants to qualify):

C. Project Location

Physical Address (or crossroads or other identifying geographic feature)

City, state, and zip code, if project will be constructed outside the community that will benefit

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D. Community point of contact, if different from applicant

Name _____

Title: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Project Overview

4) Describe the proposed clean energy project, including a summary of the energy technology or infrastructure to be constructed or improved. *[No more than 450 words]*

5) Select which of the following objectives will be addressed by the proposed clean energy project. Select all that apply. Selections must be supported by the project description provided in Question 4.

- Improving overall cost-effectiveness of energy generation, transmission, or distribution systems;
- siting or upgrading transmission and distribution lines;
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation by rural or remote areas;
- providing or modernizing electric generation facilities;
- developing microgrids; and/or
- increasing energy efficiency.

6) Provide an estimate of the total project costs and a short rationale for the estimate. *[No more than 450 words]*

7) Who will own the project (i.e., city government, installer/developer, electric utility, etc.)?

Project Benefits

8) Briefly describe the community that will be impacted by the project, including a description of the community’s energy needs or priorities. Needs can be described using qualitative descriptions or metrics, such as those found in the [Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#), [DOE’s Energy Justice Dashboard](#), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) [EJScreen](#). *[No more than 250 words]*

9) Describe the project team’s relationship to the community and community engagement strategy, including efforts to build support for the project. *[No more than 250 words]*

10) Describe any anticipated benefits of the proposed project, and the project team’s efforts align these benefits to the community’s energy needs and priorities discussed in the previous question. *[No more than 500 words]*

11) Describe any anticipated negative impacts of the proposed project, and the steps the project team will take to minimize these impacts. Please describe the extent to which the project may disproportionately impact vulnerable populations within the community. *[No more than 500 words]*

Technical Approach

12) Describe why the technology was selected. Include a description of any alternatives considered and why the selected technology is best suited to the community and the proposed purpose. *[No more than 350 words]*

13) Provide justification that the proposed technology is commercially available. Only commercially available technology will be considered. Technology may be considered commercial if *[No more than 300 words]*:

- A. Technology is frequently installed for similar purposes throughout the region,
- B. Needed equipment can be purchased or leased from commercial vendors for the intended purpose, or
- C. The technology can be warranted.

14) What is the capacity of the proposed system? Specify capacity for each of the elements below, if applicable for your project:

Power generated in kW or MW

Energy stored kWh or MWh.

Energy saved annually in kWh or MWh

Distance (in miles) and voltage (in kV) of transmission and/or distribution lines provided

15) What is the estimated system lifetime (in years)?

16) What is the system scale?

Facility Scale – one building or facility.

Community Scale – more complex projects with multiple buildings.

Utility Scale – larger scale projects generating power to many facilities or providing power to the grid, typically generating 10MW or more.

17) Will the project be connected to the grid?

Yes, the project will be connected to the grid, and power from the project will flow to the grid via transmission and/or distribution lines, substations, etc.

If yes, identify any interconnection agreements, net energy metering agreements, or arrangements/agreements required for the sale or purchase of energy.

No, the project is independent and will not be connected to any external grid.

18) Describe any work, including studies or engineering design, completed to date. What additional steps are needed to design and implement the project? A detailed workplan with milestones will be required at the full application stage. *[No more than 500 words]*

19) Describe environmental regulations that will impact the project, including any permits that need to be obtained. Have necessary permits been obtained? If no, what is needed to obtain them? *[No more than 500 words]*

20) Describe how the project will be maintained after operation begins and the grant ends. This could include a summary of an operations and maintenance plan, operations and maintenance workforces needs, the intent to hire/contract operations and maintenance, or some other explanation. *[No more than 350 words]*