



Arkansas Grid Enhancement Grant Subaward Program

Program Guidance and FAQs

April 2, 2024



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The information covered in this document references and, at times, paraphrases federal guidelines and requirements for clarity. Applicants are required to adhere to all applicable federal requirements, award terms and conditions, and any other conditions DFA may outline during the award phase.



Introduction

Grid Enhancement Grant Subaward Program: Background

On September 28, 2023¹, Arkansas was awarded \$10.3² million in federal funding through the Grid Enhancement Grant program offered through the U.S. Department of Energy (U.S. DOE), with more funding anticipated for the state in the next three years. This funding is provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Section 40101(d) and focuses on modernizing America's power grid against natural disasters. As outlined within the state's Program Narrative³, these funds will be used to enhance the resilience of the electric grid and prevent electric outages by addressing three objectives:

- 1. Increase the Reliability of the Arkansas Electric Grid** – Reduce the frequency with which the grid experiences sustained interruptions and decrease the number of customers impacted by all-hazard events, especially those customers that experience higher-than-average frequency and duration of outages.
- 2. Achieve Whole Community Impact** – Ensure that these Grid funds benefit Arkansans, specifically those who reside in communities that are more susceptible or vulnerable to electric power outages.
- 3. Support the Development of the State's Grid Workforce** - Support the development of the state's workforce responsible for grid enhancement projects, potentially by means of offering additional professional development and/or workforce development opportunities. Consider additional efforts to help Arkansas train, attract, and retain a skilled workforce.

Funding Allocations

The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) seeks proposals for grid enhancement and resilience projects that will strengthen the resilience of the electric grid and prevent electric outages in the state. Given the interest in grid resilience projects and workforce development opportunities, the state intends to set aside up to 40% of funding for grid workforce development projects, with the remaining funding towards grid resilience and grid hardening projects.

Timeline and Deadlines

Applicants should plan to abide by the following timelines and deadlines for submission of proposals:

Application Period Opens (90 days): **Tuesday, April 2, 2024**

Application Submission Deadline: **5PM CT on Friday, July 19, 2024**

Notifications of Preliminary Awards: **Early September 2024** (Please note: Before final awards are made, the state must submit recommended awards to U.S. DOE for approval.)

¹ The official press release can be viewed here: <https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/news/details/arkansas-will-receive-more-than-10-million-to-enhance-the-states-electric-grid>.

² The state has been awarded \$10.3 million in funding through the Grid Enhancement Grant. Per guidance from the U.S. DOE, up to 5% of this funding may be used to administer the grant (\$515,000).

³ DFA held an open comment period for the Program Narrative that closed on May 19, 2023. The document was submitted to the U.S. DOE for approval shortly after.



Eligibility

The U.S. DOE provides guidance regarding eligible applicants and investments. Those interested in applying for funding **must** comply with eligibility parameters outlined below.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include all Arkansas electric utilities (e.g., investor-owned electric utilities, electric cooperatives, and municipal electric utilities). Please see the comprehensive list of eligible entities below (definitions included for clarity):

Entity	Description
Electric grid operator	Maintains reliable and secure operation of the electric grid
Electricity storage operator	Manages and maintains energy storage system
Electricity generator	Generates electricity for public use
Transmission owner or operator	Maintains efficient and reliable transmission of electricity from electricity generators to regional/local distribution operators
Distribution provider	Operates and manages local and/or regional energy distribution networks
Fuel supplier	Supplies fuel used to generate electricity in the state

Organizations should direct questions or concerns regarding their eligibility to infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov. The Office of the Infrastructure Coordinator will provide additional guidance as appropriate.

Applicants listed on the sam.gov suspension and debarment list will not be considered for funding.

Eligible Projects and Investments

Through this program, most of the state’s funding will be allocated to projects that strengthen the state’s electric grid through one or more of the following eligible enhancements:

- Adaptive protection technologies
- Advanced modeling technologies
- Fire-resistant technologies and fire prevention systems
- Hardening of power lines, facilities, substations, or other systems
- Monitoring and control technologies
- Relocation of power lines or reconductoring of power lines with low-sag, advanced conductors
- Replacement of old overhead conductors & underground cables
- Undergrounding of electrical equipment
- Use or construction of distributed energy resources (DERs) for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events, including microgrids and battery-storage subcomponents
- Utility pole management
- Vegetation and fuel-load management
- Weatherization technologies and equipment



Up to 40% of the state's funding will be allocated to grid workforce development projects **that are related to the eligible project types listed above**. An applicant submitting a workforce development project will need to select one of the eligible projects listed. Projects can include the following aspects of workforce development:

- Plans to attract, train, and retain an appropriately skilled workforce (e.g., through registered apprenticeships and other joint labor management training programs that serve all workers)
- Plans to partner with a training provider/educational institution to develop training programs that prepare skilled workers for new and existing employers (e.g., labor, community college, etc.)
- Develop opportunities to increase accessibility of appropriate credentials and licenses (e.g., requirements for appropriate and relevant professional training, certification, and licensure)

Please reference the Workforce Development appendix for additional information.

Ineligible Projects

Construction of new electric generation facilities, large scale battery storage not used to supply electricity where needed during disruptive periods, purchase and installation of an emergency generator, cybersecurity measures, and compensation adjustments or bonuses to existing staff are not considered eligible projects.

Small Utilities

A small utility is defined as selling less than 4,000,000 Megawatt Hours (MWh) per year. Per U.S. DOE guidance regarding funding for small utilities, at least 49% of this funding will be set aside for projects submitted by small utilities.⁴

Cost Match Requirements

Applicants will need to agree to the following match requirements. Upon preliminary selection for award, applicants will need to provide a Match Commitment Letter. Applicants must provide details of the cash or in-kind cash value of all proposed cost match to fulfill the project. This will be a component within the budget section. Cost match includes:

- Cash Cost Match: Encompasses monetary contributions to the project made by the applicant or third party (entities/individuals that do not have a role in delivering the project) for all costs incurred and paid during the project.
- In-Kind Cost Match: Encompasses contributions to the project where a value of the contribution can be readily determined and verified, but where no actual cash is transacted (e.g., volunteer personnel hours, donation of space or use of equipment, etc.).

⁴ A State or Indian tribe receiving a grant under the program shall ensure that... the percentage made available to eligible entities that sell not more than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year is not less than the percentage of all customers in the State or Indian tribe that are served by those eligible entities.



Match Requirements

Under this program, U.S. DOE calculates cost match for small⁵ utilities and large⁶ utilities as percentage of the federal funds only, rather than the Total Project Cost. For simplicity, DFA has calculated the following cost match percentages based on Total Project Cost:

- **Small:** Total cost match (to be provided by the applicant) would equal **32.9% of any project cost.** The subaward would be equal to 67.1% of the project cost.
- **Large:** Total cost match (to be provided by the applicant) would equal **53.7% of any project cost.** The subaward would be equal to 46.3% of the project cost.

Example calculation for a small utility with a total project cost of \$500,000:

Project cost = \$500,000

Cost match provided by small utility = \$164,754 (32.9%)

Subaward provided by DFA = \$335,345 (67.1%)

Submission Criteria

- Projects must demonstrate at least some implementation within the State of Arkansas, with direct benefits to Arkansans;
- Projects submitted must comply with the eligibility criteria outlined in this document;
- Projects must be consistent with at least one of the three program objectives from the state Program Narrative; and
- Applications must be submitted by email to infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov by **July 19, 2024**.

Application Overview

The subaward application requests information regarding the following topics:

Section 1: Applicant Information and Eligibility

- Applicable entity description, eligible project(s), and small/large utility designation
- Acknowledgement of compliance with federal guidelines

Section 2: Project Scope and Delivery

- Overall project scope (50 – 250 words): High-level project description
- Project narrative (2000 words or 5 pages limit): Detail project activities and outcomes, including how funding will be used and how the proposed project addresses one or more of the three program objectives
- Project timeline
- Identification of risks and mitigation strategies
- Explanation of whether the project is replicable in other service areas

⁵ This match amount is 1/3 required under U.S. DOE guidance, plus 15.8% excess match to satisfy the state's portion, as allowed under IIJA 40101(d).

⁶ This match amount is 100% under U.S. DOE guidance, plus 15.8% excess match to satisfy the state's portion, as allowed under IIJA 40101(d).



Section 3: Funding and Budget

- Budget summary form identifying project budget, expenses, and cost match

Section 4: Reporting and Metrics

- Selection of 3 – 5 applicable U.S. DOE Build Metrics and 2-3 applicable U.S. DOE Impact Metrics from the provided lists

Section 5: Community Benefit

- Explanation of benefits to the community regarding the project’s ability to reduce the likelihood of disruptive events and the impacts on low income and/or rural communities

Proposal Evaluation

To facilitate fair scoring and evaluation, applicant submissions will be grouped by entity size (e.g., small utility submissions will be scored independently and prioritized against other small utility submissions).

Prescreening (Eligibility Review): Proposals will be prescreened to ensure that (a) minimum eligibility requirements have been met, (b) proposal is complete and includes all required forms (c) proposal was submitted by the deadline, (d) the applicant’s record in sam.gov is active and (e) the entity is not suspended or debarred from receiving federal funds. If a project proposal fails the prescreening phase, the applicant will be notified in writing that it is not eligible to receive funding for the reason stated.

Proposals will be reviewed and scored on how fully they satisfy the evaluation criteria listed below:

Criteria	Description	Scoring
Project Narrative	The extent to which the proposed project aligns with eligibility criteria, and delivers measurable benefits towards one or more of the three outlined program objectives	20 points
Concept Maturity	The extent to which the project proposal is “shovel-ready,” articulates a realistic financial plan, and avoids imposing additional costs/obligations to the state government beyond Grid Resilience grant funding	20 points
Community Benefit	The extent to which the proposed project is cost effective and benefits Arkansas residents, particularly those in low-income communities, rural communities, and/or areas with higher risk of impacts from natural disasters	20 points
Risk and Reporting	The extent to which a proposed project anticipates project risk(s), outlines a plan to address risk(s), and can report on metrics and project progress	20 points
Replicability	The extent to which proposed project plans, activities, and anticipated outcomes can be replicated in other service areas and/or future projects	20 points
	Total	100 points



DFA reserves the right to determine whether a proposed project will receive full or partial funding based on the results of the evaluation.

Applicant organizations will also be assessed for general fitness and capability of execution.

Notifications of Awards

Once proposals are evaluated and preliminary funding award recommendations are made, the state will submit a pre-award package to U.S. DOE for approval. Additional required information will be requested from applicants to facilitate the approval of all projects. Requested information will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- SF-424A Budget Information form and Budget Justification form
- Cost match commitment letter
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Questionnaire
- Any applicable waivers
- *For Small Utilities Only:* [EIA form 861M](#) or alternative documentation of MWh sold per year

Final awards will be made in Fall 2024 and are contingent on federal approval and successful award negotiations between the applicant and DFA.

Program Administration

Implementation of the Grid Enhancement Grant program is led by the DFA's State Infrastructure Coordinator. Any inquiries or questions regarding the program and/or related materials put forth from DFA should be directed to infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov.

Considerations for Small Utilities

In accordance with guidance from the U.S. DOE⁷, at least 49% of this funding will be set aside for small utilities. A small utility is defined as selling less than 4,000,000 Megawatt Hours (MWh) per year. Small utility applicants selected for preliminary award will be required to submit the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) [EIA form 861M](#) for the last report year.

If an applicant believes they qualify as a small utility but are not included in the EIA data reported in Table 10 (2022 Utility Bundled Retail Sales – Total) of the Electric Sales, Revenue, and Average Price Reports (linked here: https://www.eia.gov/electricity/sales_revenue_price/pdf/table_10.pdf), you may submit alternative documentation demonstrating eligibility.

⁷ A state or Indian Tribe receiving a grant under the program shall ensure that... the percentage made available to eligible entities that sell not more than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year is not less than the percentage of all customers in the State or Indian tribe that are served by those eligible entities.



Compliance and Flow Down of Award Provisions

As a condition of funding, DFA must apply the terms and conditions of the Grid Enhancement Grant Award, including provisions around Intellectual Property to all subrecipients (and subcontractors, as appropriate).⁸ Applicants will need to acknowledge compliance with the following federal guidelines:

- [Davis-Bacon Act](#) (Fair labor and wage requirements)
- [Build America, Buy America \(BABA\) requirements](#) (Using U.S. made materials for project builds)
- [Executive Order 11246, Equal Employment Opportunity](#) (Equal and fair employment)
- [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) requirements](#) (Considering environmental impacts)

Reporting, Tracking and Segregation of Incurred Costs

These funds can be used with other funding, as necessary to complete projects, but tracking and reporting must be separate to meet federal reporting requirements and related Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance. The Recipient must keep separate records for federal IJJA funds and must ensure those records comply with IJJA requirements. Funding provided through IJJA that is supplemental to an existing grant or cooperative agreement is considered one-time funding.

Lobbying Restrictions

By accepting funds under this award, the applicant agrees that none of the funds obligated on the award shall be expended, directly or indirectly, to influence congressional action on any legislation or appropriation matters pending before Congress, other than to communicate to Members of Congress as described in 18 U.S.C. 1913. This restriction is in addition to those prescribed elsewhere in statute and regulation.

⁸ Strict compliance to Award terms, as required by 2 CFR 200.327, and Intellectual Property Provisions as required by 2 CFR 200.101. All Grant awards made under this Program shall comply with applicable law, including regulations contained in 2 CFR Part 200 as amended by 2 CFR Part 910.



Appendix: Additional Guidance for Workforce Development Projects

Workforce development projects are highly encouraged and are **considered eligible as they relate to and/or support the workforce for the eligible project types listed below**. This Workforce Development resource was developed in partnership with the state’s Chief Workforce Officer.

Eligible Grid Resilience Projects include:

- Adaptive protection technologies
- Advanced modeling technologies
- Fire-resistant technologies and fire prevention systems
- Hardening of power lines, facilities, substations, or other systems
- Monitoring and control technologies
- Relocation of power lines or reconductoring of power lines with low-sag, advanced conductors
- Replacement of old overhead conductors & underground cables
- Undergrounding of electrical equipment
- Use or construction of distributed energy resources (DERs) for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events, including microgrids and battery-storage subcomponents
- Utility pole management
- Vegetation and fuel-load management
- Weatherization technologies and equipment

Considerations for Workforce Development Projects

In designing projects, applicants may consider activities and programs which further workforce development efforts through:

- Partnerships with educational institutions and/or training providers to prepare skilled workers for new and existing employers (e.g., labor, community college, etc.)
- Plans to attract, train, and retain an appropriately skilled workforce (e.g., through registered apprenticeships and other joint labor management training programs that serve all workers)
- Use of an appropriately credentialed workforce (e.g., requirements for appropriate and relevant professional training, certification, and licensure)
- Improving development opportunities and services to jobseekers and employers

Existing Workforce Development Programs: Electric Grid Resiliency Training Programs

The table below outlines sample grid resiliency training programs offered in Arkansas. This table is not comprehensive but is intended to provide an initial list of resources for workforce programs that vary in duration and program type.

Institution	Program Type
University of Arkansas - Cossatot	Aerial Lineman
Arkansas State University Three Rivers	Tower Technician
University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton	Underground Directional Drilling



University of Arkansas Pulaski Tech	High Voltage Lineman
University of Arkansas Hope - Texarkana	Solar Energy Technology
Arkansas State University Newport	High Voltage Lineman
National Park College	Mechanical Engineering – Transfer Degree
National Park College	Industrial Maintenance Electrician Apprenticeship
University of Arkansas- Fayetteville	Electrical Engineering

Existing Workforce Development Programs: Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Programs

Many linemen drive service trucks that require a CDL. The following table details several CDL technical programs offered in the state. Like the above table, this is intended to provide an initial sample listing of CDL technical programs.

Institution	Location
ASU Three Rivers	Malvern
UA Cossatot	Nashville
UA Hope-Texarkana	Hope
UA Rich Mountain	Mena
ASU Mountain Home	Mountain Home
ASU Mid-South	West Memphis
ASU Newport	Newport
Black River Technical College	Paragould
East Arkansas Community College	Forrest City
North Arkansas College	Harrison
NorthWest Arkansas Community College	Bentonville
Phillips Community College of the UA	Helena and Stuttgart
Southeast Arkansas College	Pine Bluff
UA Community College at Batesville	Batesville
UA Community College at Morrilton	Morrilton
UA Pulaski Tech	Little Rock



Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

What is the Program's overall purpose?

The Grid Enhancement Grant program provides funding to enhance and modernize America's power grid against disruptive events. In the context of this program, a 'disruptive event' is defined as "event[s] in which operations of the electrical grid are disruptive, preventively shut off, or cannot operate safely due to natural disasters."

Through this program, the state encourages industry investments across three primary areas - increasing overall grid reliability and resilience, decreasing the effects of disruptive events on vulnerable communities, and developing the state's workforce.

What is the Period of Performance for this program?

The initial U.S. Department of Energy (U.S. DOE) award will have a Period of Performance of five years. Work must be performed within the Period of Performance of the grant agreement, ending in April 2028.

How do I apply for this funding?

All interested applicants must submit a completed project proposal with requested attachments to infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov no later than **5PM CT on Friday, July 19, 2024**. Applicants must comply with the eligibility parameters outlined in the Program Guidance document to be considered eligible.

What is considered a small utility?

A small utility is defined as selling less than 4,000,000 Megawatt Hours (MWh) per year.

Small utility applicants selected for preliminary award will be required to submit the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) [EIA form 861M](#) or alternative documentation with your proposal demonstrating eligibility.

What are the Cost Match requirements for this program?

Under this program, U.S. DOE calculates cost match for small⁹ utilities and large¹⁰ utilities as a percentage of the Federal funds only, rather than the total project cost. For simplicity, DFA has calculated the following cost match percentages for **any** Total Project Cost:

- **Small:** Total cost match (to be provided by the applicant) would equal **32.9% of any project cost**. The subaward would be equal to 67.1% of the project cost.
- **Large:** Total cost match (to be provided by the applicant) would equal **53.7% of any project cost**. The subaward would be equal to 46.3% of the project cost.

⁹ This match amount is 1/3 required under U.S. DOE guidance, plus 15.8% excess match to satisfy the state's portion, as allowed under IIJA 40101(d).

¹⁰ This match amount is 100% under U.S. DOE guidance, plus 15.8% excess match to satisfy the state's portion, as allowed under IIJA 40101(d).



What is an example of the cost match calculation for a small utility?

Example calculation for a small utility with a total project cost of \$500,000:
Project cost = \$500,000
Cost match provided by small utility = \$164,500 (32.9%)
Subaward provided by DFA = \$335,500 (67.1%)

What is an example of the cost match calculation for a large utility?

Example calculation for a large utility with a total project cost of \$500,000:
Project cost = \$500,000
Cost match provided by large utility = \$268,500 (53.7%)
Subaward provided by DFA = \$231,500 (46.3%)

Does DFA have a minimum or maximum limit to project funding awards?

Currently, DFA is not imposing limits on project size or scope but reserves the right to do so in the future.

[Proposal Submission](#)

When are project proposals due?

All project proposals and attachments must be submitted via email to infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov no later than **5PM CT on Friday, July 19, 2024**. All applicants will receive an email confirmation for each submission.

What are the submission criteria?

Projects must: 1) demonstrate at least some implementation within the state of Arkansas, with direct benefits to Arkansans; 2) comply with the eligibility criteria; 3) be consistent with at least one of the three program objectives from the state Program Narrative; and 4) be submitted by email to infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov no later than 5PM CT on July 19th, 2024.

When can an applicant expect to hear back on their project proposal(s)?

The evaluation period will begin in August, and notifications of preliminary awards are expected in September 2024. DFA will contact applicants selected for an award.

Final awards will be made during Fall 2024 and are contingent on federal approval and successful award negotiations between the applicant and DFA.

Note that additional required information will be requested from applicants to facilitate approval of all projects.

Can an applicant submit more than one project proposal?

Yes, if an applicant desires to submit multiple eligible projects in multiple locations, the applicant must submit a separate proposal for each project and/or location.

Is there a page limit to the proposal?



The Project Narrative section is limited to a maximum of 2,000 words or 5 pages. Other sections and responses have word count limits.

Can an applicant apply to the State’s Grid Enhancement Grant Program and the U.S. DOE Grid Innovation Partnerships Grant Program during the same application cycle?

An eligible entity is not allowed to submit the same proposal for a grant under IIJA Section 40101(c) and Section 40101(d) in the same application cycle. Eligible entities can submit proposals to both Sections 40101(c) and 40101(d) in the same application cycle if they are separate scopes of work that address different resilience measures.

How will proposals be evaluated?

Proposals will be reviewed and scored on how fully they satisfy the evaluation criteria listed below:

- Project Narrative (20 points)
- Concept Maturity (20 points)
- Community Benefit (20 points)
- Risk and Reporting (20 points)
- Replicability (20 points)

Eligibility

Who is eligible?

Eligible applicants include all Arkansas electric utilities (e.g., investor-owned electric utilities, electric cooperatives, and municipal electric utilities) as well as electric grid operators, electricity storage operators, electricity generators, transmission owners or operators, distribution providers, and fuel suppliers.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your organization’s eligibility, please contact infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov for additional guidance.

Can an entity that is not based in Arkansas, but delivers utility services in the state, apply for funding?

Yes, so long as the project directly benefits Arkansans in areas such as improving grid resiliency and the effects of disruptive events.

What types of projects are eligible?

Most of the state’s funding will be allocated to projects that strengthen the state’s electric grid and are directly related to enhancing one or more of the following: adaptive protection technologies; advanced modeling technologies; fire-resistant technologies and fire prevention systems; hardening of power lines, facilities, substations, or other systems; monitoring and control technologies; relocation of power lines or reconductoring of power lines with low-sag, advanced conductors; replacement of old overhead conductors & underground cables; undergrounding of electrical equipment; use or construction of distributed energy resources (DERs) for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events, including microgrids and



battery-storage subcomponents; utility pole management; vegetation and fuel-load management; and/or weatherization technologies and equipment.

Workforce development projects are also eligible **as related** to one of the eligible project types listed above. Applicants interested in proposing a workforce development project should reference the related Workforce Development Resource on the DFA Website.

Are there any other resources or examples of eligible projects?

In addition to the eligible projects list in the Program Guidance document, applicants may also reference project examples found in resources provided by the U.S. DOE.

- [Low-Cost Grid Resilience Projects](#)
- [Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant Website](#) – Additional Resources Section

What types of projects are ineligible for funding?

Ineligible projects include construction of new electric generation facilities; large scale battery storage not used to supply electricity where needed during disruptive periods; purchase and installation of an emergency generator; cybersecurity measures; and/or compensation adjustments or bonuses to existing staff.

I have questions not covered in the Program Guidance or this FAQs. Who should I reach out to?

Implementation of the Grid Enhancement Grant program is led by the DFA's State Infrastructure Coordinator. Any inquiries or questions regarding the program and/or related materials put forth from DFA should be directed via email to infrastructure@dfa.arkansas.gov.