MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Hello, and welcome to the Grid Resilience Formula Grant Webinar for Tribal Entities. I’m Meredith Braselman with ICF and I will be your host today. A few housekeeping items before we get started on the webinar. This WebX meeting is being recorded and may be used by the US Department of Energy. If you do not wish to have your voice recorded, please do not speak during the call. If you do not wish to have your image recorded, please turn off your camera or participate by phone. If you speak during the call or use a video connection, you are presumed consent to recording and use of your voice and image.

All of our participants are in listen only mode today. If you have any technical issues or questions, you may type them in the chat box and select to send to the host. We will host a Q and A following today’s presentation. Please submit all questions in the chat box, and address it to the appropriate speaker. If you are joining us by phone from a region without current internet access, you can send your questions by calling or texting the following number: 240-474-7670 and a member of our support team will add your question to the queue, and we will provide that number again a little bit later.

If you need to view the live captioning, please refer to the link that will appear in the chat. To view the closed captioning, please use that link. Finally, we will post today’s presentation on the Grid Resilience Formula Grant for Tribal Entities to the tribal entities web page by next Monday and the recording of today’s webinar will be available in about two weeks. We will notify when it is live. So today we are going to hear from Ariel Horowitz, Deputy Director for Grid Modernization with the Grid Deployment Office for opening remarks. Ariel, welcome.

ARIEL HOROWITZ: Hi, good afternoon everyone, and thanks so much for joining us. My name is Ariel Horowitz, I’m the Deputy Director for Grid Modernization here at the DOE Grid Deployment Office. Next slide, please. Just to introduce GDO, we’re a relatively new office within the Department of Energy. We were created to really focus on accelerating grid transition for the policy outcomes around resiliency and access to clean renewable energy, that are laid out in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the IRA. And we work across three different divisions to do that - our Generation Credits and Markets Division, our Transmission Division, and our Grid Modernization Division. Next slide, please.

This program, the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grants is within our Grid Modernization Division. You can also see an overview of some of the programmatic work that we do with our Transmission Division and our Generation Divisions here and we’re certainly happy to answer any questions that folks have about any of our other programs that we can, or to be in contact with folks about these other programs. But we’re very excited today to be able to talk about some of the modifications that we’ve made to the Grid Resiliency and Tribal Formula Grants Program. And so with that, I’ll pass it off to Dave Parsons who is the Program Manager for this Program.

DAVID PARSONS: Great, thank you very much, Ariel, and thanks to the ICF team for helping to facilitate. Good morning everyone, or good afternoon if you’re in the eastern part of the country. My name is Dave Parsons. I’m the Program Manager for the State, Tribal, and Territory Grid Resilience Programs here at the Grid Deployment Office. And I just want to welcome everybody to the meeting, and thank you for your participation. And to start things off, I’m going to summarize what we have planned for the webinar today.

We’re going to spend some time talking at the beginning about the highlights of the Grid Resilience Formula Grants Program, to make sure everyone is aware of the program and the support that we have available. The deadline for Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations to apply to receive their formula grants is coming up soon. The deadline is August 31st, 2023. And we’ve also made some important updates that Ariel alluded to, to the program, and we’re really excited to share the details on that. And we’ve set aside much of the time today for questions and answers on those changes to the overall program. Okay, next slide, please. And I think we can go one more. Okay, thank you.

So, just for background, the Grid Resilience Formula Grant Program is authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and it provides funding to States, Tribes, Territories, and territories for grid resilience investments over five years. The program is designed to strengthen and modernize the power grid against wildfires, extreme weather, and other natural disasters and the funding itself is intended to support projects and investments that reduce the likelihood or the consequences of these kinds of disruptive events.

The first two years of funding is available now. It totals over $192 million dollars, specifically for Tribes including Alaska Native Corporations. And it’s a formula grant, again, so that means that it’s not competitive. The funding is allocated to each Tribe. There’s no competition among the Tribes to receive their grant.

The formula itself is required by statute and it takes into account different factors, including population, land area, and the probability and severity of grid outages on the land of the State or the Tribe. And as we’re seeing really across the whole country, investment is really needed in grid resilience in the face of extreme weather and so we, this is really a great opportunity to get some federal funding to help advance Tribal grid resilience goals.

As I mentioned, it’s very important to know that the deadline for applications for the first two years of funding is coming right up, at the end of August and we’ll talk a little bit about the requirements and how to apply during the webinar. But just wanted to emphasize the importance of getting an application in. This secures your funding allocation for the first two years, and if a Tribe misses the deadline it can still apply for funding for future years, but we don’t want any Tribe to miss out on the first two years’ of funding that’s available. Okay, we can go to the next slide.

So, as I mentioned, this program specifically targets investments in electric grid resilience and the law identified several types of potential investments and also calls out some investments that are not allowed. In general, we can fund investments like hardening of grid facilities, undergrounding or relocation of distribution lines, building micro grids, monitoring and control technologies, and other kinds of investments that are intended to improve electric grid resilience. And it’s important to know that the law does prohibit certain kinds of investments, including new electric generation facilities and cybersecurity investments, for example.

There are other programs at the Department of Energy that are able to fund these types of investments and our Office is available to assist Tribes in identifying what those opportunities might be, to help fill in gaps where this program doesn’t apply. Okay, let’s go to the next slide.

Okay, so where are we in the process? So the Grid Deployment Office has been reviewing all the applications that are coming in. We began awarding grants last month in May. Two Tribes were actually included in the first batch of awards. I think we’ve awarded seven Tribes so far their awards and it’s over $3.2 million dollars in formula grants that have been given out to Tribes so far.

We will continue to make awards throughout the summer and going into the fall. And just to note, Tribes don’t have to wait until the deadline to submit their applications. We’re reviewing the applications as they come in, and we’re making awards on a rolling basis. So the sooner we receive an application, the sooner we can make the award. Next slide, please.

So the first two years of funding, I mentioned is $192 million dollars set aside for Tribes. The table here indicates the range of funding that’s available for Tribes. And as you can see, most Tribes are eligible for between $100,000 dollars and $500,000 in the first two years of funding. And a Tribe or anybody can go to our website, you can easily find out the exact allocation for a specific Tribe or a native corporation. The link is there on the side. And also you can use your phone and the website where this information is posted. Next slide, please – let’s go one more.

Okay, so this is the good part. So over the past several months our team has conducted extensive outreach to Tribes across the country. We wanted to increase awareness of the program and answer questions about how to apply. And as part of that process, we have received a lot of feedback about the challenges that are facing Tribes. This has been very helpful for us. We’ve worked to improve the program design and make the funding more accessible.

So, for example, we have developed templates and application assistance resources to make the application itself as straightforward as possible to guide Tribes through the application process. We have also worked with our grant administration partner to ensure a mail-in option is available to Tribes that may not have access to reliable internet. And last week we were very excited to be able to announce that another program flexibility that many Tribes have requested, the ability to form a Tribal consortium.

This was a challenge for us just because of the unique way that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is written for this program, but we have worked really hard to make adjustments to the program requirements to enable this option. So with that overview, I’d like to turn it over to Homari Aoki who’s on our team, and she leads our Tribal engagement work. And she’s going to share some more details about some of these updates. Thank you.

HOMARI AOKI: Thanks, Dave. Hello, everyone. My name is Homari Aoki. I am a Management and Program Analyst with the Grid Deployment Office and I’ll be talking about the updates. Alright, so one of the recent updates that we made was that you can now submit applications by mail. Applications for the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant can be submitted through either FedConnect, or by mail now.

You can use the QR code on the screen to access the application submission page and this would be the preferred method of submission. However, we have heard that there are some internet connectivity issues, so you can also submit the application to our physical address in Morgantown, West Virginia and mail in applications will be accepted if they are postmarked by the August 31st deadline. And if you’re experiencing difficulties downloading the application forms, please reach out to us and we can work with you on getting the application materials.

Alright, so the main update that we have today is that Tribal consortium applications are now allowed. We heard from many Tribes and their representatives on the need to have Tribal consortium applications in order for Tribes to take advantage of this funding. And last week Meekly [phonetic] made that amendment to increase the flexibilities to allow for consortium applications. For the purposes of the Grid Resilience Formula Grant, a Tribal Consortium is a group of Indian Tribes, including Alaska Native Village Corporations and Alaska Native Regional Corporations that would like to submit one single application.

While this definition is maybe different from what you’re used to for a Tribal Consortium, this structure allows multiple Tribes to streamline their applications while still adhering to the legislative statute in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In a Tribal Consortium application, a designated lead Tribe will handle the application and the administration of the award.

The lead Tribe would submit one application on behalf of the Tribes within the Tribal Consortium and that lead Tribe would ultimately be responsible for fulfilling all grant requirements, including the cost match and reporting for the combined allocation for the Tribal Consortium. If participating Tribes of a Tribal Consortium would like to provide any or all of the 15 percent cost match for the applicant, then the cost match commitment should be documented and submitted with the application through a cost match commitment letter.

I’ve also included an example on the screen of what a Tribal Consortium would look like. In this example, Tribes A through F, each have an allocation of $100,000 dollars and would like to participate in a consortium application. If lead Tribe F agrees to lead the Tribal Consortium on behalf of all Tribes, then they would submit a combined grant allocation application for $600,000 for all Tribes A through F to the Department of Energy.

The Formula Grant Agreement would be awarded to lead Tribe F for the full $600,000 dollars, and lead Tribe F would administer the grant and make payments to vendors and receive the reimbursements directly from DOE through the ASAP payment system on behalf of the tribal consortium. If there’s any Tribes that have already applied for this grant, but would like to join a Tribal Consortium, then they should contact GDOTribalAssistance@hq.doe.gov, and we’ll have that email on a later slide as well.

So Tribal Consortiums can also authorize third party agents to administer the grant on their behalf. In this case, a third party can be anyone willing to work with a consortium and that includes, but isn’t limited, to representatives from a Tribal health consortium, any inter-Tribal regional organizations, or independent consultants. So it can be pretty much anyone who would work with the consortium.

A third party agent can handle the application and the administration of the award for the Tribal Consortium and they can submit on behalf of the Tribal Consortium using the lead Tribes Unique Entity Identifier, or the UEI. Funds can also be deposited into the third party agent’s account on behalf of the eligible Tribal Consortium as needed to pay for allowable costs. And the third party agent can also submit the required reporting for the Tribal Consortium as well, and this is similar to what a third party can do on behalf of an independent Tribe.

It’s also important to note that the lead Indian Tribe of the Tribal Consortium would still ultimately be responsible for the grant requirements, even when using a third party agent. And using the same previous example of Tribes A through F with the lead Tribe being Tribe F, a third party could submit the application using Tribe F’s UEI. The Formula Grant Agreement for the Consortium would be awarded to lead Tribe F and the third party would be able to administer the grant and make payments to the vendors and receive reimbursement through that ASAP system on behalf of the Tribal Consortium.

So the Tribal Consortium application has two key application components that are slightly different from the application for an individual Tribe. In addition to the components of a program narrative for an individual Tribe that I’ll go into in detail on the next slide, a Tribal Consortium would also need to include how the resilience objectives within the program narrative will benefit all participating Consortium Tribes, and include how Consortium Tribes will participate in decisions regarding the use of the grant funds. We do also have a sample program narrative template that is available and is in the chat.

Additionally, we would require a designation letter from each participating Tribe, as well as the lead Indian Tribe. Each participating Indian Tribe of a Tribal Consortium would need to submit a letter designating the lead Tribe to act on its behalf as the lead of the Tribal Consortium. The participating Tribe would need to designate the lead Tribe to receive their allocations on their behalf. And the lead Tribe would also need to submit a letter in order to accept the designation as the lead for the consortium.

The letter should state that the lead Tribe would apply for grant funding and administer the grant on behalf of all of the participating consortium Tribes, and it should include a list of the participating Tribes in the letter. We will have sample template letters available on our website very soon, and we do have some additional guidance on Tribal Consortiums that are listed in the Frequently Asked Questions on our website as well. Going back to the program narrative, the program narrative should reflect all Tribes within the consortium.

There’s seven required components of the program narrative with one additional requirement for Tribal Consortium applications. The objectives and metrics can be provisional and should drive the resilience investments for all Tribes. There should be a section on criteria on how to determine awards to eligible entities. There should be methods in which the Tribal Consortium will solicit awards, as well as how they would distribute the funds.

The added section is the one that I mentioned earlier on a statement on how the resilience projects would benefit all of the participating Tribes. We would also include information on equity to ensure equitable benefits. And then there should be an explanation on how the Tribal Consortium plans to use the technical assistance and administration funds, which are still capped at 5 percent of the federal funds. And then there should be evidence of a public notice and a hearing, and that public notice and hearing will need to encompass all Tribes within the consortium.

At a minimum, the lead Tribe or a third party agent should host one public notice and hearing that encompasses all the Tribes within the Consortium. And the public notice and hearing can be virtual, it can be in person, or a hybrid, but must be completed before that August 31st deadline. There is no minimum time requirement between the public notice and hearing, but if an individual Tribe previously completed a public notice and hearing, then it would need to be redone if they would like to join a Tribal Consortium, since that public notice and hearing would need to include the updated portions of the program narrative.

So we’ll now highlight a few Frequently Asked Questions. Many of the questions we received are listed in the Frequently Asked Questions document on the grant application website. And as I mentioned earlier, many of the updates for the Tribal Consortium application are listed in that document, so I would encourage everyone to look at that document in detail. And we’re always looking to update that document, so if you have any questions after this webinar, feel free to send us an email and we will answer any of those questions that you have.

Alright, so as Dave mentioned earlier in the webinar, this grant cannot be used for new electric generation. However, modification of an existing generation facility may be an eligible project. The project would need to reduce the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events in line with the grant’s objectives and should meet one of the eligible uses of the grant funds.

Modifying an existing generation facility cannot increase the maximum rated output of the original nameplate capacity, as this would be considered new generation. So expansion of existing generation facilities, like increasing solar generation would not be allowed. And replacing one type of generation facility with another is also not allowed. However, replacing things like old generation components with new components, such as replacing wind turbines and damaged solar cells of an existing solar farm would be allowed, as well as overhauling a diesel engine of an existing system.

You can also build inventories of parts and components needed to provide grid resilience benefits. You can use the funding for training and contracts for critical maintenance needs, or refurbishment of existing transformers. And you could also add new fuel tanks in order to replace old faulty tanks or to increase fuel storage capacity, which would be allowed through this program.

If you have any questions on what modifications are allowable, please let us know and we would be happy to discuss any projects that you have. Some additional resources that we’ve been asked about. GDO is continuously trying to add new resources for this grant application based on applicant feedback. So on top of adding more questions to our Frequently Asked Questions document, we’re currently developing recordings on grant application assistance that will go more into detail on the forms of the grant. These recordings will be located on the Grid Deployment Office website in the next few weeks. And we also provide one-on-one meetings with Tribes to discuss the grant.

We can provide an overview of the grant itself, as well as provide information on potential cost match sources that may be relevant to your Tribe or your project, and we can also provide information on some relevant funding opportunities based off of the conversations that we have. And we may also be able to help in reaching out to eligible entities. If you’re interested in a one-on-one meeting, please reach out to us and we would be happy to schedule that.

So before we get into the Q and A portion, I did want to highlight a few other resources that Tribes could use in order to find energy related funding. The first one is the White House BIL Tribal Playbook which includes all of the funding opportunities available for Tribes through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. There is also an IRA guidebook that provides information on the Inflation Reduction Act funding as well.

And then the second resource is the Department of Energy’s Department of Indian Energy. They have a current funding opportunity page which includes funds for Tribes, not just within the Department of Energy, but with other agencies as well. So I would highly encourage Tribes to look at that page periodically to find the current opportunities that are available to them.

And then finally I wanted to highlight two other programs from other federal agencies. They’re not the only two programs available for Tribes, but they’re worth mentioning. The first is the USDA PACE program for Powering Affordable Clean Energy. This is a new program with the USDA that is available for Tribes. The application opens in two weeks on July 10th. PACE can fund new renewable power generation and energy storage for Tribes. Under this program, USDA will forgive up to 60 percent of a loan of up to $1 million dollars for renewable energy projects that use wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, or biomass, as well as energy storage projects. Applications for this are processed on a rolling basis, so I would encourage Tribes to look into this program as well, especially if your Tribe is interested in renewable energy.

And then the second is the Solar for All grant competition. Yesterday the EPA announced a $7 billion dollar program to expand the number of low income and disadvantaged communities primed for residential solar investment. EPA, through this program, intends to make up to 60 awards and they’ll host a webinar on July 12th to discuss the application package. So that is something to mark on your calendars. A Notice and Intent is required by August 28th for Tribal governments and Inter-Tribal Consortium, and then the full application would be due on September 26th. And with that, thank you so much for your time. I’ve included our website as well as our contact information and we can now open it up to questions.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Thank you so much, Homari. We’ve now come to the Q and A portion of the webinar. As we shared earlier, you may submit your questions to the host via the Chat box on the right of your screen. If you are joining by cellphone, you may text your questions to 240-474-7670. Again, that number is 240- 474-7670. We also have additional staff from the Grid Resilience Formula Grant for Tribal Entities joining us for the Q and A.

So please join me in welcoming Jay Hanna from the National Energy Technology Laboratory, Tom King with Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Lucas Greza with the National Energy Technology Laboratory. So I will ask you all to turn on your cameras when you have a moment and unmute yourself. Our first question is for David. Is the installation of solar panels to provide electrical power eligible?

DAVID PARSONS: Thank you for that question. I think, so unfortunately the law does prohibit using these grant funds for construction of new electric generation facilities, including solar panels. So that’s one of the reasons why we want to work with Tribes to help them identify other funding opportunities, because of the constraints around what this program can do. As Homari mentioned in one of her slides, there are certain things that we can do to fund projects on existing generation facilities with, as long as it works to improve the grid resilience of those facilities, but in general you can’t use these grant funds for new generation, including solar.

MEREDITH BRASESLMAN: All right, thank you. Tom King, the next question is for you. It’s two questions. Can you expand on the projects that are ineligible, and are feasibility assessments eligible?

TOM KING: Sure thing. Well, thank you very much, appreciate the questions. And as Dave said, by law there are certain restrictions, prohibitions. You know, one being the new generating facilities, as well as cybersecurity. But we have heard a lot of the comments and feedback from the Tribes indicating the need for some of the generation and through these conversations discussions of what can be done on modifying existing generations. So we’ve tried to reach out and provide more clarity, as Homari went through that. That is hopefully a change in flexibility that can be addressed.

When it comes to feasibility studies, within the Q and A we have posted, there is different types of studies. So depending on the actual scoping of the study, it could be a planning study, a scoping study. It could be a feasibility study. So depending on the specifics it may be part of the project which then could be covered within the overall project cost. If it’s more of a scoping feasibility study to look at multiple options and different technologies, that could be part of the technical assistance efforts that a certain Tribe may pursue. So it’s going to be specific to what that scope is needed. But if that feasibility study is looking more to specific project, then it could be part of that project also.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: All right, thank you. Homari, a couple of related questions on consortia for you. Can a utility be part of the consortium, or be a third party? And, is a cooperative the same as a consortium, a non-profit 501C3?

HOMARI AOKI: Thank you. Those are great questions. So for the first question on whether a utility can be part of a consortium, in terms of the participating groups within a Tribal Consortium, they would have to be eligible applicants. So it would be Tribes including Native villages, Alaska Native Village Corporations, and Alaska Native Regional Corporations. So a utility would not be considered as part of the utility, or as part of the Tribal Consortium. They could sub-grant to a utility, but in terms of who is included as the consortium, a utility would not be part of that group. They would, however, be able to be the third party agent and apply or submit the application on behalf of a Tribal Consortium.

So if there is a group of Tribes that they are working with. then they could designate the utility to apply and administer the grant for them. With the second group of questions of whether the cooperative is the same as a consortium, in terms of our Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant, the consortium is really, the definition is two or more Tribes, including those Alaska Native Corporations, that would submit a single application. So if there is a non-profit that is formed by a group of Tribes, then they could potentially be a consortium. But in our formula grant it would just be a group of Tribes that are considered a consortium in this case.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Very good, thank you. Jay Hanna, the next question is for you. If a Tribe and the Tribal Corporation submit a joint application with the Tribe being the lead applicant, does the Tribal Corporation need to submit a designation letter or a cost match commitment letter?

JAY HANNA: Yeah, good question. So, the application would be submitted on behalf of the lead Tribe for that Tribal Consortium. A cost match commitment letter is, or a cost match letter is required with every application explaining where the 15 percent cost match is coming from. The lead Tribe is actually responsible for the entire cost match for the entire consortium. So if the cost match is being provided by one of the, by each of the Tribes that are part of that consortium, you would heed a cost match commitment letter from each one of those participating Tribes that would be providing their pro rata share of the cost match.

That cost match commitment letter could be part of the same letter designating that lead Indian Tribe as the lead for the consortium giving them the authorization to submit the application on behalf of the particular Tribe. So that can all be incorporated into the same letter. But the prime applicant, the Tribe that’s the lead for the consortium, is responsible for adhering to all of the terms and conditions of the grant, including the cost match commitment.

So, you know, I think in most cases that lead Tribe will probably have an agreement with the participating Tribes to provide their share of the cost match. And so we would need to see that commitment, that letter committing to that, with the application that’s submitted by the lead Indian Tribe.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: All right, thank you. Tom, the next question is for you. Can these funds be used solely for workforce development related to grid infrastructure?

TOM KING: Well, thanks, this is a good one. So, workforce development is kind of a broad topic, but workforce development is something that’s really a key part of the BIL and looking at being able to prepare the workforce in helping provide grid resilience. So a lot of times the specifics is going to determine whether it’s allowable or not so we would probably need a little bit more detail to what is meant by workforce development. But as you start to work with the project officer and the team members within NETL and GDO, we can have a better determination of this, but training activities associated with some of the project efforts are part of the overall project and would be allowable. But I think the specifics would really determine whether you could use all of the dollars for workforce development. And Jay or Dave or others may have some additional further insight into that.

DAVID PARSONS: No, I think that’s right, Tom. I think it definitely could be part of a project or a component of what is the funds are used for. And the best thing to do is to reach out to us or to your project officer after you’ve been awarded your grant and we can discuss sort of the specifics of what you have in mind and help to clarify what the details are.

TOM KING: And to add to that, one of the important things is when you submit the application, we have been encouraging applicants to keep the objective scopes at a very high level, and not submit a specific project, per se. And so once you identify what your objectives, what the criteria and the approach that you’re going to take, these conversations can kind of be iterative of what projects are allowable. So keep that application at a very high level.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Okay, thank you. Dave, the next question is for you. The allocations to Alaska are small. Has this changed, and can we save up to the fifth year to use?

DAVID PARSONS: Yes, so that is one of the challenges with the program. With so many eligible applicants, even though there is a lot of funding that’s available, it does in some cases depending on how the formula works, you know, the population, band area, in some cases will result in smaller allocations for some Tribes. And that is still the case.

And I think to answer the second question, Tribes are allowed to save their funds, especially if that’s something that they have, the Tribe would like to do a larger project it would need more than just one or two years of funding to perform that project, they’re certainly allowed to apply for the grant and then start implementing that when the time is right to move that forward. I just wanted to emphasize though that the Tribe does need to apply before the deadline, or they will lose access to the first two years of funding. So that would be a big chunk that would be lost if they didn’t, it the Tribe didn’t get their application in before the end of August. But certainly can apply, get that funding in, save it up for a couple of years, and then move forward with a larger project when ready.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Very good. Homari the next question is for you. If Tribes do not own the utility, can we provide these funds to the city utility?

HOMARI AOKI: So, if the Tribe doesn’t own the utility, then they could still apply for the grant and then they could sub-grant the work out to the city utility. When a project is sub-granted to an eligible entity like a city utility, then the funds that are sub-granted will also have a cost match requirement so that will be variable depending on the size of the utility. In most cases it’ll be a hundred percent of the amount of the funds that are subawarded.

If they’re a small utility, then it’ll be reduced to one third of the amount of the subaward, but they could work with the city utility in order to create those projects. If the Tribe wanted to work with the city utility and the city utility was authorized to submit the application on behalf of the Tribe, then that would be possible as well. They would have to use the Tribe’s UEI in order to do so and the Tribe would still have that ultimate responsibility for the grant funds and the cost match and the reporting requirements, but they could work together in order to complete these grid resilience projects.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Okay, thank you. Dave the next question is for you. The original grant specified limitations on who could be the award recipient, such as only the grid owner or power company who has to provide a 100 percent match. Is this the same program, and/or how has that requirement changed?

DAVID PARSONS: Yeah, so that is one of the requirements. This is the same program I believe. That is one of the requirements of this program, is that the states or the Tribes or the territories will sub-grant their awards out to what are referred to as eligible entities. And that could - oh great thank you - that could include the power company, the local utility. There are other options as well. It could be an energy storage operator. It could be a fuel supplier or a distribution provider. So there, these are the eligible entities on the slide that are called out specifically in the law.

 And if a Tribe had a different idea in mind of who they would sub-grant to, you know, we would certainly be willing to discuss that and they could reach out to us and we could talk about what the potential of that could be.

So, in terms of the cost match that the eligible entity would have to provide, so as Homari mentioned on the last question, that will depend on what kind of eligible entity it is. If it’s a large utility or any of the other kinds of eligible entities, it’s going to be another 100 percent of the total amount of the sub-grant. But if it’s a small utility and sometimes the utilities that are serving Tribes would be small, and that’s defined as selling less than four million megawatt hours of electricity per year, then the subaward cost match would only be one-third of the amount of the sub-grant.

And this is complicated of course and it’s something that we could certainly help talk through in more detail with any Tribes that are interested to talk about it. So just reach out to us and we’d be happy to set up a call to talk through it.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Great, thank you. Jay, the next question is for you. Could the cost match be provided by a sub-grantee?

JAY HANNA: Yes. As Tom and Homari both mentioned, there’s two levels of cost match for this grant program. So that the state or Indian Tribe which is the prime recipient of the grant from DOE, needs to provide a 15 percent cost match on the entire federal amount and then any amount that’s sub-granted to an eligible entity for an actual resilience project has to be matched either 100 percent if it’s a large utility, or one third if it’s a small utility.

So going back to the 15 percent match, yes you can pass that 15 percent cost match to the sub-grantees and have them pay the one third plus the 15 percent on their amount or the 100 percent, if it’s a large utility, plus the 15 percent on top of that. We have seen several states and Indian Tribes use that particular model. If that is what your plan is, you would explain that in the cost match information page that you submit with your application. And then what you would need to do is when you identify your subawardee, you would need to get them to provide a cost match commitment letter reflecting the one third or the 100 percent plus the 15 percent match that they would need to provide to satisfy the overall grant requirement.

One thing that you need to keep in mind under that particular model is that if you are keeping back 5 percent of your grant for technical assistance administration, you still need to provide the 15 percent match on that 5 percent. So you need to explain how you’re going to do that. Because some, you know, if you’re just requiring, you know, if you subaward $50,000 dollars to an eligible entity and they have to provide the one third match plus the 15 percent, or the 15 percent match on that $50,000 dollars, you know, at the end of the day you’re not going to have that 5 percent covered that you’re using for your technical assistance administration.

So that’s something that you would need to address in that cost match information page as well as part of the application requirement. You just need to explain where the cost match, the full 15 percent cost match is coming from on the entire federal allocation. But yes it can be done. Thank you.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: All right, thank you. Tom, the next question is for you. What examples would fall under the category of weatherization tech?

TOM KING: Yeah, we’ve received a lot of questions in regard to weatherization. Once again, broad category, and what does it mean when the BIL calls out weatherization technologies and equipment? And for the purposes, in the context of the grid resilience section of the BIL, it’s really focused on grid components and systems, and not weatherization of facility or buildings. There are other programs that focus on weatherization of facility or buildings.

So examples of weatherization in this case could be, you know, if they’re wind turbines, being able to coat wind turbine blades to prevent icing. It could be putting in heating elements for some of the diesel generators to ensure things don’t freeze up. So it’s more of the weatherization of the existing grid components that are there.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Okay. And another one for you Tom. Can this funding be used for battery banks for high risk homes and buildings in case of power outage? Also, batteries to balance draw and distribute load?

TOM KING: So energy storage systems are allowable. There is a stipulation that calls out prohibitions and limitations of large energy storage facilities that aren’t used for helping provide grid resilience. In the case of energy storage for some of the backup generation that has come up, it’s can we use it for one residential home? The idea is, this needs to provide benefits to the community. So if it’s a bank of energy storage systems for a community, then it would be allowable if there’s a facility that provides services to that community. Once again, that would be an allowable type project for an energy system.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Okay, thank you. David, this next question is for you. If someone submitted their application before the original deadline but have not received notice of award yet, is there a link for a list of existing awards?

DAVID PARSONS: Yes, there is. And I think it’s on our website and we can put a link to the page where all the awards that have been announced are listed. We’ve only made a couple of awards so far. We’re just getting started. So that’s going to ramp up as we get into the summer. So don’t worry if you haven’t received your award yet and you applied in March or something. You know, that’s to be expected. And if you have any questions about whether we’ve received your application or you wanted to confirm that, feel free to contact us at that PDO travel assistance email address that we put up, and we can talk with you about confirm to make sure that we have your application and everything is good to go.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Okay. Thank you. Lucas, this question is for you. If the application is high level how do we answer the environmental questionnaire?

LUCAS GREZA: Yeah, a great question. So, for the base application from the Tribe, you’ll want to keep the environmental questionnaire pretty generic. And you’ll select just Group A, skip over the rest, and then sign at the bottom. Where it gets a little more involved is when you submit your subaward notification. That’s when you’ll fill in all of the information and project specific where you go into more detail on that.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Very good. Homari, the next question is for you. Is there a list of eligible subaward entities?

HOMARI AOKI: Thanks. So as I believe Dave had mentioned, Tribes do need to sub-grant to electrical entities. Within the statute there are six eligible entity types that are automatically deemed as the eligible entities. That includes C-Electric grid operators, electricity storage operators, electricity generators, as well as transmission owners or operators, distribution providers, and fuel suppliers. If a Tribe would like to sub-grant to an eligible entity or any entity that is not listed in this list, then once you are awarded the funds then you could request for a case by case basis eligible entity determination. We do have that information on the grant application website. There is a form listed and you would just submit that and we would make that determination. So there are the six eligible entities that are listed within the statute, but there is the possibility for other eligible entities to be added.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Okay. Very good. We’re getting close to the end here. I’m going to try to get in a couple more questions if we can. So, Tom, this question is for you. Would hazardous fuels management within the community beyond the power company’s transformer be an acceptable objective?

TOM KING: So, this one may be a little difficult to consider how, where it would be allowable so we probably need a little bit more details to what hazardous fuels are being considered for this. If it’s fuel for some of the diesel systems that are existing, maybe if it’s looking at some of the issues of SF6 and circuit breakers or some of the fuel disposal, or [unclear] of disposal mineral oil from transformers, maybe. But it depends on how the approach is being taken to ensure that it’s a proven grid resiliency and reducing the likelihood of disruptive events. So we probably, that’s one of those areas we probably need a little bit more detail to flesh out a little bit.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Okay, thank you. Jay, next question. Where can I find formula grant funding available to Alaska Tribes under this program?

JAY HANNA: So, we have posted a list of all of the eligible Tribes and all the other eligible applicants and their funding allocations on the website. So that is, there’s a whole list of them and you can scroll through and see for each Tribe or Alaska Native corporation what the allocations are. And we’ll do that again for the next round of funding as well. So if you go to that link there you can click on a link that will say allocations, and it will take you to the full list of all the different eligible applicants.

MEREDITH BRASELMAN: Very good. Thank you very much. So that brings us to time today. That’s our final question we’re able to get to. Thank you so much to all of our presenters and Q and A folks today. A copy of the slides will be available on the Grid Resilience Formula Grant Webinar for Tribal Entities webpage by next Monday and the recording will be available in about two weeks. We will send all of the attendees on today’s call an email when that is available and you can find the link in the chat now. So again, thank you very much to everyone for presenting today. Thank you for all of our attendees joining us and for participating in the Q and A. Everyone please take care, and we will see you next time. Thank you.

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