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DAVE PARSONS: Hello. And welcome to the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant Informational Webinar for fiscal year 2024 for new grant applicants. I'm Dave Parsons, program manager with the Grid Deployment Office. This webinar will focus on next steps for new grant applicants. New grant applicants are eligible applicants that did not submit a Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant application for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

The goals for today's webinar are to familiarize new grant applicants with the fiscal year 2024 application cycle, and to outline available implementation support. Today, we will be discussing the Grid Resilience formula grant program, which provides \$2.3 billion in funding over five years to states, tribes, and territories for Grid Resilience investments. This program is designed to strengthen and modernize the power grid against wildfires, extreme weather, and other natural disasters.

The program is funded by the bipartisan infrastructure law, which provides significant funding to support investment in our electric grid to address some of the biggest challenges we're facing with resilience. We have aging electric infrastructure, and we're seeing bigger threats that hit harder and more frequently. And we don't always have enough funding to invest in our electric grid.

I imagine that nearly everyone on this webinar has experienced the effects of extreme weather, wildfire, or natural disasters in recent years. Whether we're talking about hurricanes, flooding, wildfire, extreme temperature, we're experiencing the effects of extreme weather with greater frequency and intensity. And our electric grid was not built to withstand these kinds of threats.

The grant funding we're discussing today is intended to support projects that reduce the impacts of these kinds of events. The Grid Deployment Office has several funding opportunities available designed to address these challenges. The Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant program is the noncompetitive portion of Grid Resilience funding available through the bipartisan infrastructure law. A total of \$2.3 billion is available over five years, and we have just made available the third year of funding. Applications are due by April 17, 2024. On the competitive grant side, we have the Grid Resilience industry grants, SmartGrid grants, and Grid Innovation Program. Almost \$13 billion is available across all four programs. As we'll discuss today, members of our team at the Grid Deployment Office and our partners are available to assist applicants navigate the application process. We also provide technical assistance with grid resilience planning and investment decision making. So please reach out to us with any questions you may have.

We're happy to meet with you to talk through the challenges you're facing, and assist with the application process, grant administration, and project implementation. The Grid Resilience formula grant program provides funding to states, tribes, and territories for grid resilience investments. The deadline for fiscal year 2024 funding is April 17, 2024. And funding is available now.

The program offers a formula grant. So funding is allocated to each eligible-- eligible recipient. And there is no competition among applicants to receive the grant. We will talk more about the requirements and how to apply during the webinar. But I want to emphasize the importance of getting an application in before the deadline.

This will secure your funding allocation for fiscal year 2024 funds. If an applicant misses the deadline, it may still apply for funding in future years. But we don't want anyone to miss out on the funding that is available now. Importantly, applicants do not need to know which grant grid resilience projects they will invest in. Projects can be identified after funding is awarded. The Grid Deployment Office has developed sample application templates and other resources for applicants, which are available on our website. We will also work with applicants if needed to ensure applications are complete. The bipartisan infrastructure law includes-- does include cost match and subgranting requirements for this funding, which applicants should be aware of. We'll talk more about the grant requirements today, and we're available to assist applicants one on one as well.

Now, I'll give a quick update on the first two years of funding. So far, we have awarded 174 applicants over \$782 million. We're still processing fiscal year 2022 and 2023 applications. So we expect to continue to make awards on a rolling basis until all applications have been processed. For fiscal year 2024, while individual allocations vary based on the formula, the smallest allocations have increased to at least \$80,000. As I mentioned, if you did not apply for funding last year, you can still apply for fiscal year 2024 funds, although you will not be able to claim funds from the previous cycle.

The bipartisan infrastructure law requires the Department of Energy to utilize a formula with five factors to allocate funding among states, tribes, and territories. The formula is required by statute, and takes into account factors, including population, land area, and the probability and severity of grid outages on the land of the state or tribe within the last 10 years. The law requires the department to update the formula each year to use the latest data available, which can result in changes to each recipient's allocation year to year.

Any unclaimed funds from fiscal year 2022 and 2023 were rolled forward into the pool of funds for fiscal year 2024. Without overview, I'd like to turn it over to Homari Aoki on our team, who leads our tribal engagement work, to dive into the details of the grant requirements, and the support we can offer recipients. Thank you very much.

HOMARI AOKI: Hello. My name is Homari Aoki. And I am a project manager for the state and tribal assistance programs. For the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula grants eligible projects can include projects on utility pole management, such as replacing poles, improving inspection, and maintenance practices, undergrounding electrical equipment, and cables, or relocating them, reconductoring power lines in order to increase capacity, or repair aging lines, or improve vegetation management to widen rights of way, as well as grid resilience technologies.

There are a few other projects that are available as well. But I do want to highlight that there are a few projects that are not allowed with this grant program. This includes no new electric generation, including distributed generation. What that means is that we cannot increase the capacity for the existing grid. However, technologies to enable the use of distributed energy resources is allowable. Construction of large-scale battery storages that do not supply electricity during disruptive events are also prohibited under this grant.

However, small-scale battery storage that does provide electricity during power outages is an eligible project. Finally, funds cannot be used for cyber security. To execute the grid resilience projects, eligible entities must implement the grid resilience projects. These eligible entities include electric grid operators, electric storage operators, or generators, transmission owners, or operators, distribution providers, or supply-- fuel suppliers.

In many cases, this may be a utility such as an investor-owned utility, an electric co-op, or a tribal utility. Other entities that would like to carry out the projects may be approved separately through a secretarial designation process. This grant recipient-- the grant recipient will submit a form requesting the eligible entity designation once the grant funds are awarded. However, entities implementing the project will be required to provide a cost match.

New applications can be submitted through FedConnect or by mail. You can use the QR code on the screen, or the link to directly apply to the application through FedConnect. You will also be able to find additional information on the FedConnect opportunity summary page regarding the full details of the grant. In case you're not able to apply through FedConnect due to issues with internet connectivity, you can send the information to the address on the screen.

Applications will need to be sent to the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown, West Virginia. Please make sure that you're sending any mail-in applications to the correct address. Mail-in applications must be postmarked by the April 17, 2024 deadline to be eligible for this round of funding. If you're having issues with internet connectivity, please reach out to us prior to the application deadline, and we'll work with you to get the information you need to apply for this grant.

I will mention that the FedConnect submission is the preferred method. And the mail-in option is available mostly for those with internet connectivity issues. For this round of funding, we have \$562 million available across all eligible grant recipients. Allocations for states range from two million to 39 million. US territories range from 675,000 to 3.6 million. And Indian tribes, including Alaska Native corporations, have an allocation range of 84,000 to 5 million.

Each eligible grant applicant has an allocation posted on our website. You can use the QR code, or URL, to find your allocation. This allocation is the maximum funds your state or tribe can request through the application process. We also have the data sources that we use to determine the allocations available on our website to view as well.

So with these grant funds, up to 5% of the federal funds can be used for technical assistance and program administration. These funds can be used to facilitate the distribution of information to reduce the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events as well. And this 5% can be given to a third party to provide support. I've included an example on the right of a \$100,000 DOE award. In this case, up to \$5,000 can be used for technical assistance and administration, leaving 95,000 for the Grid Resilience Project.

Grant recipients are required to provide a 15% cost match on the federal funds. Cash as well as in-kind contributions, such as staff time, can be used as cost match. This cost match can be potentially-- be provided by other entities if they're willing to help. Some grant recipients have found other entities to help provide the cost match, including their utility, or their state.

Most federal funding cannot be used to fulfill cost match requirements. And this could include any staff time that is paid by a federal source. Most federal funding cannot be used as cost match for federal grants. But we'll have some information on a later slide on some federal funding that can be used. The 15% cost match can go towards the Grid Resilience Project, increasing the amount available for the project.

The 15% cost match can also be used for technical assistance and program administration. In the previous \$100,000 award example, this would increase the funding available for the Grid Resilience Project or the technical assistance funding. And the-- if the cost match is used for technical assistance and administration, this would increase the funding available to \$20,000.

While we have mentioned that most federal sources of funding are not eligible for a cost match, we have identified a few that are eligible specifically for tribes. Tribes may use Self-Determination Act funding. From the treasury, the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund, as well as the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, can be used as cost match as well.

For grant recipients in Alaska, the Denali Commission has funding available for cost match. And some funds have been made available, specifically to help with cost match for bill and IRA funding. And finally, the Native American housing and Self-Determination Act funding can be used as well. I would also encourage grant recipients to look towards regional funding opportunities that may be available.

There is a second cost match requirement for the eligible entities, as mentioned earlier, which-- and the eligible entities would be the ones carrying out the Grid Resilience projects. The cost match requirements of an eligible entity is 100% for the federal funds used for the Grid Resilience Project. However, if the entity is considered a small utility, which is a utility that sells less than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year, their cost match would be reduced to one third of the amount awarded.

This does impact the amount of funding available for the project. So that is something to be aware of. I want to summarize the cost match requirements since there are two different parts. Grant recipients are required to provide a 15% cost match on the federal funds. The Grid Resilience projects have an additional cost match for the eligible entity. The eligible entity would be required to provide either a one third or 100% cost match on the Grid Resilience project depending on their classification.

If a grant recipient would like to implement the Grid Resilience projects themselves, and-- they would be required to provide the 15% cost match, and the cost match for the eligible entity. As mentioned in the last slide, to be considered a small utility, the entity would need to sell electricity. If an entity that is not listed on the eligible entity types, they would need-- they could still complete the project, but they would need to receive a secretarial designation before they can carry out any Grid Resilience projects with this program.

Grant recipients can apply individually, as well as through a Tribal Consortium, if applicable. We have 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. For the purposes of the Grid Resilience State and Tribal 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 of a Tribal Consortium may be different from what you're familiar with, this structure allows multiple tribes to streamline their applications, while adhering to the legislative statute.

In a Tribal Consortium application, a designated lead tribe will handle the application and the administration of the award. The lead tribe will submit one application on behalf of the tribes within the Tribal Consortium. This lead tribe will be responsible for fulfilling all grant requirements, including the cost match and reporting for the combined allocation of the Tribal Consortium.

If participating tribes of a Tribal Consortium provides any, or all, of the 15% 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 included an example on the screen. In this example, tribes A through F each have an allocation of \$100,000, and would like to participate in a consortium application. If tribe F agrees to lead the Tribal Consortium on behalf of all tribes, then they would submit a combined grant application for \$600,000 for 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. Lead tribe F will administer the grant and pay-- make payments to vendors, and receive reimbursements directly from

DOE through the ASAP payment system on behalf of the Tribal Consortium. If there's tribes that have already applied, but would like to form a Tribal Consortium, please contact the gdotribalassistance@hq.doe.gov. I did also want to mention that the lead Indian tribe could be an Alaska Native Corporation and-- or a-- an Indian tribe as well.

Tribes 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 the Tribal Consortium, including-- the tribe or a Tribal Consortium, including but not limited to a representative from a tribal health consortium, an intertribal regional organization, or independent consultant. A third-party agent can handle the application and administration of the award for a Tribal Consortium.

And that third party can submit on behalf of the Tribal Consortium using the lead tribe's unique Entity Identifier. Funds can be deposited into the third-party agent's account on behalf of the eligible tribe, or the Tribal Consortium, as needed to pay for allowable costs. The third-party agent can also submit the required reporting for the tribe or the Tribal Consortium.

It's important to note that the lead Indian tribe of a Tribal Consortium will ultimately be responsible for the grant requirements or the lead Indian tribe for their own application. Using the same previous example of tribes A through F with lead tribe being tribe F, a third party could submit the application using tribe F's UEI. The formula grant agreement for a Tribal Consortium would be awarded to the lead tribe F. And the third party would be able to administer the grant and pay-- make payments to vendors and receive reimbursements through the payment system on behalf of the Tribal Consortium.

There are two key application components that are required for the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant program. The first is the program narrative. The program narrative is a document that, at a minimum, should address what kind of eligible entities will carry out the projects, and the process for selecting those entities. You do not need to name the entities or the projects within the program narrative. And we actually encourage grant recipients to keep the program narrative at a high level, as providing too much detail about projects may limit the flexibility post award.

However, the program narrative should address multiple years of funding allocations, as this will make it easier to apply for future years of funding. We'll ask for the project specifics once a grant recipient receives the award. So we will have time after the funds are awarded to get additional information about the projects themselves. And I'll go into detail on the program narrative in a later slide.

Before you write the program narrative, a public notice and public hearing are required. The public hearing should discuss what is included in the program narrative. There's no requirements on the manner in which the public notice and public hearing are conducted, and can be in a form that is in line with the grant recipient's customs.

This must occur before the April 17 deadline. So it's important to get the ball rolling. Multiple grant applicants can conduct a single public notice and hearing, as long as the public notice and hearing are inclusive of all grant applicants in question. The second application component is the designation letter, which identifies the sole entity within the state or Indian tribe to apply for, receive, and administer the award.

This ensures that we only get one application for each state or Indian tribe. For a Tribal Consortium, the designation letter should be submitted by each tribe within the consortium. Participating tribes that are not submitting the application must submit a letter designating the lead Indian tribe to act on behalf of the Tribal Consortium to receive the allocations. This would be the only documentation that a participating tribe needs to submit. The rest of the documentation will come from the lead tribe.

The lead tribe must also submit a letter accepting the designation as the lead tribe for the consortium. The letter should state that they will apply for the grant and administer the grant on behalf of all the tribes belonging to the consortium. We do have some sample designation letters specific for Tribal Consortia as well as designation letters for individual grant recipients as well on our website under Application Forms.

And we have additional guidance on Tribal Consortia listed on our frequently asked questions. And we do also have a sample program narrative, as well as a template for the program narrative as well. Going back to the program narrative, I did quickly want to highlight the components that are listed in the program narrative. This includes objectives and metrics criteria, methods, and-- as well as the funding distribution. If you're applying as a Tribal Consortium, you do need to also include a statement on how the resilience objectives will benefit all participating Consortium Tribes, and how the tribes within a consortium will participate in decisions regarding the use of the grants. Other than that, the program narrative should include an approach to equity, how the technical assistance and administration funds will be used, and then evidence of the public notice and hearing.

There should be a copy of the notice included in the program narrative. Again, we have an example program narrative available and relevant sections from the sample program narrative can be copied into your own application if it's relevant to your tribe or state. Project specifics do not need to be included in the application, but we will ask for that information post award.

Besides the two key application components, there are a few other application documents that must be submitted with the application. There are three standard application components. We have some videos up on our website for additional information on how to fill those out. The grant also requires a pre-award information sheet and cost match information sheet on the 15% cost match requirement of-- for the grant recipient.

If an entity other than the grant recipient has committed to providing the cost match for the grant recipient, then a cost match commitment letter from that entity should also be included in the application. If the grant recipient is working with a federally-funded research and development center regarding these funds, additional information is also required.

GDO is continuously adding new resources for the grant application based on applicant feedback. GDO has additional recordings on grant application assistance available that go into detail on the forums for the grant. These recordings are located on the Grid Deployment Office website under Application Resources. We also provide one-on-one meetings to discuss the grant to-- with grant recipients. We can provide an overview of the grant itself, answer any questions you may have, as well as provide information on cost match that may be relevant to your project, or share any other relevant funding opportunities based on the conversations that we have. We may also be able to assist in reaching out to eligible entities. If you're interested in a one-on-one meeting, please reach out to us.

New this year, GDO is hosting office hours leading up to the application deadline. These will occur on the second Tuesdays of every month from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM eastern time. You can register here. And the links are also available on the Grid Deployment Office website.

Once you're awarded the grant, you'll then share the specifics of the Grid Resilience products. GDO will continue to also work with you to ensure project success. We've developed a few different post-award resources to assist in the implementation of projects, as well as identify projects for grant recipients as well.

Grant recipients may also request Grid Resilience assistance for technical and other resilience-- other assistance, including training, capacity building, technical analysis, among other assistance. We have a simple form available to fill out for the assistance requests. We may be able to provide other resources if we're not able to fulfill your assistance request. Additionally, we have support documents available as well. We recently published a microgrid overview document as well as a document on low cost Grid Resilience projects.

These are available for reference purposes. And finally, we have workshops available for grant recipients as well. We've hosted a number of workshops for our state recipients, and have hosted a-- Grid Resilience exchange workshops for our tribal grant recipients. And we're also in development of some future workshops as well. We continue to build out our post-award resources based off of the needs of our grant recipients. So please let us know if there are additional needs as well.

We do have a few other resources specifically for tribes in order to find additional energy-related funding. The White House bipartisan infrastructure law tribal playbook includes all the funding opportunities available for tribes through the bipartisan infrastructure law. A similar tribal playbook is available for the Inflation Reduction Act funding as well. The Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy also has a great resource on current opportunities available for tribes.

Their web page includes energy-related opportunities, not just within the Department of Energy, but in other agencies as well. Finally, the Access to Capital Clearinghouse was recently launched by the bipartisan infrastructure, or from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Access to Capital Clearinghouse includes opportunities across federal agencies, not just on energy, but on other funding opportunities as well.

Another resource that opened on February 1 is the Clean Energy Innovator Fellowship. A joint partnership between the Office of Energy, Efficiency, and Renewable Energy, the Office of Indian Energy, and the Grid Deployment Office hosts institutions such as state energy offices and inter-tribal organizations may apply for a fellow through this program. Applications are open now until March 5. Eligible host institutions include state public utility commissions, grid operators, and cooperative and municipal utilities, as well as tribal utilities, inter-tribal councils, or other tribal organizations, and essential energy organizations in Puerto Rico.

Finally, I do want to provide a quick plug to the Tribal Clean Energy Summit, hosted by the Office of Indian Energy, here at the Department of Energy. The summit will occur on February 27 to 28 at the Pechanga Resort Casino in Temecula, California. The Grid Deployment Office and some of our federal project officers will be who will be working with you on your grants, will be in attendance, and will be available to answer questions regarding the application, and potential projects.

We'll also be hosting some office hours during this summit. The summit is free for tribal-elected leaders and tribal employees. So I encourage you to attend. The Grid Deployment Office will be there, and can answer any questions you have regarding the grant. Prior to the DOE Tribal Clean Energy Summit, the Grid Deployment Office and the Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management will be hosting a west coast offshore wind transmission convening series.

So if you're interested in that, it will be occurring on February 26 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at the Pechanga Resort Casino. If you have any questions, please email oswtransmission@hq.doe.gov. They will also be hosting a workshop during the Tribal Clean Energy Summit to share input on transmission topics. And with that, thank you.