

# 48772\_DOE\_GDO\_Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant Informational Webinar\_v01

WHITNEY BELL: Hello, and welcome to the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant webinar for fiscal year 2024 grant applicants. I'm Whitney Bell with ICF, and I will be your host today. First, I have a few housekeeping items for today's webinar.

This Webex 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. 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 or image. Fortunately for you, all participants are in listen only mode.

If you need to view the live captioning, please refer to the link that will appear in the chat now. We will have time for Q&A after today's presentations, though you may submit questions at any time using the Chat function. Additionally, if you have any technical issues or questions, you may type them in the chat box and select Send to Host for assistance. If you provide questions ahead of time during the presentation, just write what speaker they're for and we can make sure we address the right person.

Finally, in a very popular question that we get, a copy of today's presentation will be posted on the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant informational webinar web page by this coming Monday. The recording of today's webinar will be available on that same page in about two weeks, and we will email you when those materials are all live.

All right. With those announcements out of our way, we're going to go ahead and get started. We'll first hear from Zhanna Yermakov. She's the management and program analyst and tribal liaison with GDO's Grid Modernization Division. And we'll also hear from Dave Parsons, a senior advisor in GDO's Grid Modernization Division. Dave, would you like to jump in here?

DAVE PARSONS: Yes. Thank you so much. Good afternoon, everyone, or good morning if you're on the West Coast. My name is Dave Parsons. I'm a senior advisor with the Grid Deployment Office.

Today, we'll 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. The goals of our webinar today are to familiarize all the applicants with the fiscal year 2024 application cycle for the program, and to share the kinds of implementation support that we have available for all of you.

One important note is that this webinar is really focused on next steps for new grant applicants. So those are folks that did not submit an application for the prior cycle, the fiscal year 2022 and 2023 grant cycle. If you did submit already, you have a slightly more streamlined process that you can follow. So this is really for the new grant applicants that haven't submitted an application yet.

So first, I'm just going to briefly explain about the Grid Deployment Office. Our office is a relatively new office within the Department of Energy. Our mission is to ensure resource adequacy by supporting critical generation sources and expanding and enhancing electricity markets. We also work on the transmission system to catalyze development of new and upgraded high-capacity electric transmission lines and an improved distribution system nationwide. And we also work to prevent outages and enhance the resilience of the electric grid.

OK. I'm going to dive in now into the State and Tribal Formula Grant program in some more detail. So this program offers grants to states, tribes, and territories for projects that reduce the likelihood and consequences of grid outages due to extreme weather, wildfire, or natural disasters.

This program is authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Section 40101(d). It's a non-competitive grant program. That means you don't have to compete with other tribes to apply. We have a formula that we use to calculate your grant allocation for each year, and you just simply need to apply for the funds and they're available for you at that point.

As I mentioned, there's about \$2.3 billion available over five years. We've already provided the first two years of funding for fiscal year 2022 and 2023. And our application cycle for fiscal year 2024 is open now. And the deadline has just recently been extended to June 17. That's Monday at 11:59 PM Eastern time. Some of the highlights of this program. The most important thing to keep in mind is that you need to apply by the deadline to secure your funding. If you don't apply by the deadline, then you won't be eligible to receive your allocation for this year. You can get allocations in the future for future fiscal years, but you would lose out on the funding for this fiscal year.

Another important thing to know is that you don't have to already have a grid resilience project in mind to apply for this grant. You can apply for the grant now, and we can work together after you get your application in to decide what kind of grid resilience project you'd like to invest in. So it's not something that you need to come in already knowing and have designed a project before you make your application. You're also allowed to combine multiple years of funding together to do a larger project, if that's what you'd like to do. So you don't have to rush out the gate and start investing your money right away. If you wanted to do a larger project and you needed multiple years of funding to be able to do that, you could put that into your application. And when you get future years of funding, you can put that together and do a larger project.

As we'll talk about today, we also have many different resources available to you to help you with your application. So we have templates that you can use to put your tribe name into. You can use and adapt to your needs. We also have other resources like frequently asked questions, videos to walk you through the different parts of the application process, and other resources that are available to you to help with your application, and then also after you receive your funds, help you through the implementation process.

So we'll work with you all along the way. We're available now, so if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. And as you move through the application process, we'd be happy to meet with you one on one, or through phone calls or virtually to discuss the process, or also after you receive your funds, we'll help you navigate through the whole implementation and building your grid resilience projects. There are some requirements and restrictions that are associated with this program, which we'll talk about today that are important to know, including you need to subgrant your funds to an eligible entity. And I'll explain what that means. And there are also cost match requirements for this program that are prescribed by law. So those are important factors as well.

So you might be thinking, OK, so what can I do with these funds? There are a long list of things that are explicitly authorized in the law in terms of grid resilience investments. These are listed here. It includes things like undergrounding, distribution system, wires. It could include things like vegetation management to clear trees from near the electric grid infrastructure. It could be things like investing in weatherization

technologies and equipment or energy storage systems, micro grids. These kinds of investments to improve grid resilience are all permitted.

There are a couple of categories of investments that are explicitly excluded in the law. That includes new electric generation facilities. Those are not allowed. Also, cybersecurity investments are not allowed.

If you have any questions about what could be a good investment opportunity, we have some resources on our website that go into some relatively low cost grid resilience investment options. And like I said, we'd also be happy to meet with you to discuss some ideas that you have and whether those could fit into this program. So please don't hesitate to reach out to us too.

So as I mentioned, the law does require that states and tribes and territories subgrant their funds to what's called eligible entities to implement grid resilience projects. Eligible entities include what's listed here. Grid operators, storage operators, electricity generators, fuel suppliers, et cetera.

That's what's called for in the statute. But there are some other options, too. So if you want to work with one of these, you certainly can. In a lot of cases, the utilities that serve, your tribe would be good candidates. They would be eligible for a subaward.

If a tribe wants to implement a project itself and doesn't fit into one of these categories already, it would need to request to be designated as eligible. So we can walk through that process. That would occur after you apply for and receive your funds. You could come to DOE and request to be designated as eligible. And we will walk you through that process as well after you apply for your funds.

So how are funds allocated? So I mentioned, we have funding from Congress for this program. Congress also wrote out a number of factors that require the Department of Energy to use in establishing a formula for this program. The factors include what's shown here. Land area of the tribe, the population of the tribe, the probability of disruptive events due to extreme weather, how severe those events are. And so these are the factors that we will pull together to calculate the allocations for each of the eligible recipients.

One thing that's also important to know about this is that the law requires the Department to update the formula each year with the latest available data. And so everyone's allocation will likely change each year as we go in and get the latest data and put that into the formula and calculate the allocations for the next year.

So the allocations for the fiscal year 2024 grants are all available up on our website. You can use this link. You could also capture this QR code. It will take you right to the allocation. So you can go in and see for whichever tribe or state or territory, you can see what the allocation is for this year.

The allocations for tribes this year range from \$84,000 up to about \$5 million. Again, that just depends on things like the population and the land area of the tribe, the probability of these kinds of disruptive events on the land of the tribe, that sort of thing. But you can go to this website and you can see all of the different eligible recipients and what the allocation is for this year.

Applications for this grant program should be submitted to DOE using a system called FedConnect. This QR code and the link in the slide will take you to that system so that you can submit your application. If you don't have access to reliable internet, you are allowed to mail your application in, and you need to use this address to mail your application to the National Energy Technology Laboratory in West Virginia, and they'll process your application manually.

Again, if you've already received a grant for FY fiscal year 2022 or 2023, you don't need to reapply. You have a streamlined process. You can work with your federal project officer that's been assigned to you to

request your fiscal year 2024 funds. There are a couple forms you need to fill out, but you don't need to reapply for your next allocation.

Another important thing, just I'll reemphasize, the deadline is June 17, 2024. So that's the deadline to submit through FedConnect. If you're going to mail in your application, it needs to be postmarked by June 17 as well.

So what needs to be in your application? There's two key components that should be in the application. One is what's called your program narrative. This is a document that explains the kinds of things that you're thinking about when it comes to grid resilience for your tribe.

It doesn't need to be super detailed. It doesn't need to include specific projects. I'll talk a little bit about what goes into the program narrative in a second. But this is just a high level document that describes what you're thinking about your grid resilience grant program.

The other piece is you need to have a public hearing. So you need a public notice that you're going to have the hearing. You need to have a hearing. And the idea is that you'll take any input that you get from your tribe and your communities in your tribe and incorporate that into your program narrative. So you need to do this before you submit your application.

We don't have rules around, like, how to set up your public hearing or what to do. We simply ask that you follow your tribe's customs around this sort of thing and make sure that you have a public hearing and you can put a copy of the notice and evidence that you have the public hearing in your application when you submit it to us.

Some tribes are doing the hearing in person as a special meeting or even with their tribal council. Some tribes are doing it virtually using Zoom or other virtual means. So there's really flexible whatever works best for your tribe.

You also will need to know who's going to administer the grant on behalf of the tribe, and if there's going to be a tribal consortium that I'll talk more about that later. But if there's going to be multiple tribes participating together, we need something from all the tribes designating that they want to participate in your consortium. Again, we have samples and templates for these materials on our website. So you can take a look at those and customize them to suit your needs.

I'm not going to go into this slide in too much detail, but it'll be available for you. And again, all of these different pieces are up on our website with templates that you can use. But these are the kinds of things that go into your program narrative.

So what kind of objectives do you have around grid resilience? How do you want to see grid resilience improved? What criteria are you going to use to select or determine grid resilience investments in the future?

How are you thinking about distributing your funds? Are you going to give them all out at once, or are you going to do a competitive process?

These kinds of elements are described in the program narrative. And again, you can use the templates and other resources that we have up on our website to fill all this out.

I just want to emphasize, this document is not intended to be super detailed. We've encouraged all the applicants to keep this at a high level. This will give you the most flexibility to choose grid resilience projects in the future and chart the course that you'd like to over time as you proceed.

Tribal consortium applications. We've heard a lot about this over the last year and a half or so. We know that this is an issue that many tribes are looking for the ability to get together with other tribes and form a consortium and apply together. So we've made a change to the program last year that allows for this. If you're a group of tribes, including Alaska Native corporations, you can get together and form a tribal consortium and apply as one consortium. The way you do this is simply get to however many tribes-- and the example on the slide here, let's say there are six tribes that want to form a consortium. Choose a lead tribe to apply on behalf of everybody, and that tribe will simply submit one application, noting that it's a consortium application for all the tribes. And then DOE will provide a grant to the lead tribe that includes the allocations for all the tribes that are part of the consortium.

The lead Indian tribe is going to be responsible for fulfilling all the grant requirements and handling all the administration of the award, and ensuring that there's benefit that goes to every tribe that's part of the consortium as well.

Tribes are also allowed to use up to 5% of their grant for technical assistance and administrative expenses. So if, for example, your tribe received \$100,000 grant, you could use up to \$5,000 for these kind of expenses, leaving \$95,000 for funding different kinds of projects.

There are cost match requirements. So the grant recipient, which is the tribe, has to provide a 15% cost match. And all grid resilience projects that are executed by those eligible entities need to provide a cost match as well.

How much of that cost match depends on the type of eligible entity. If the eligible entity is a small utility, the cost match is an additional one third. If the eligible entity does not qualify as a small utility, then the cost match is 100%. If the tribe chooses to implement the project on its own and request to be designated as an eligible entity, it will have to cover the project cost match as well. So that's an important factor to be aware of.

One good thing about this is that the cost match doesn't have to be in cash. Certainly that's an option. But many tribes are going to provide their cost match through in-kind contributions, which could be staff time, for example.

Also, it could be that another entity could contribute the cost match on your behalf. So in some cases, we've seen tribes work with an eligible entity that is going to pay for the 100% cost match, but it will also cover the tribes 15% cost match. So there's a lot of flexibility about how this could come together as long as we have the cost match commitment overall for the tribe and for the projects.

I'm going to skip this slide. All these slides will be included in what's available after the webinar.

One question we get a lot is what kinds of other sources of funding are available for cost match? So in general, you can't use other federal dollars to provide cost match on a federal grant.

There are some exceptions, though, and so I've listed some of these here. Self-Determination Act funding could potentially be used. Some of the funding that came from the Treasury Department during the pandemic can be used. Denali Commission funding can be eligible. Some HUD funding is also eligible. So there are certain exceptions to that rule about federal funds being used for cost match. But we would definitely encourage you to reach out to us if you have questions about this so that we can make sure that it could be allowed.

I've mentioned a couple of times, we have a lot of resources up on our website that are available to assist, including videos to walk through the application process. But we also are available for one-on-one

discussion. So if you have any questions, please reach out to us. We have an email address here, [gdotribalassistance@hq.doe.gov](mailto:gdotribalassistance@hq.doe.gov), and we can set up a time to meet to talk if you'd like to.

We have a lot of resources from our team and we're eager to meet with you if you have any questions. We also, as I mentioned, can point you to other resources that we might be aware of that might be useful to you depending on the kinds of investments you're thinking about or the circumstances that affect your tribe. So please don't hesitate to reach out. We'd be happy to help you through the process of applying and also are going to be there every step of the way to help with implementation as well.

So getting to some of the implementation questions. I mentioned we have some supporting documents on our website already that go through relatively low cost grid resilience investment options that might be suitable for your tribe. We also have some information about microgrids and what it takes to invest in that kind of a solution to improve grid resilience.

And we also have a portal that you can use to request customized assistance specifically for your tribe. So if you have any kind of need you want to understand something about how to plan for improving resilience or how to make decisions about different options, what kind of options might be available to you, you can request assistance and we'll review those requests. And if we're able to help, we might be able to support you or find some experts that would be able to help you as well.

And so these links are available to you, too. And feel free to go check out our website to see if these are helpful to you.

The last thing I want to mention is that we're also aware of other funding opportunities. We know it's a lot. There's a ton of different programs out there. They all have their own quirks and their own requirements. We've been talking with some of our colleagues at the Department of Energy, some of the other agencies of the government that also have funding available.

So we're aware of some of these different programs, and we'd be happy to talk with you about what might be a good fit for you and be able to direct you to the teams that are overseeing those programs as well. So if this is of interest, we know for our program we can't fund new electric generation, for example, but there are many programs that can. And there could be opportunities to use these funds to invest in grid resilience and use other programs potentially to invest in clean energy or new generation, for example. So these are all available to you. Reach out to us if you have any questions. We'd be happy to talk with you more.

OK, great. So I think with that, I'll conclude. And thank you all again for your attention and your interest in the program. And I think we have plenty of time for questions and answers as well. Thank you.

WHITNEY BELL: Yes. Thank you so much, Dave, for the great overview and all those resources that are available. So as Dave mentioned, we do have time for Q&A. So please go ahead and put your questions into the chat and we'll ask them for you.

Some questions, if they are similar, we'll combine them to avoid responding to duplicate questions and we'll do our best to address the relevant points in our responses. There's also a Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant FAQ resource that you may find helpful. And you can find a link to that page in the chat now.

And while we're letting some of those questions come in, we do have some additional staff from the program team joining us for Q&A. So please join me. I'm going to ask you all to turn on your camera so we can put you here on stage with Dave.

Please join me in welcoming Jay Hanna, Amie Heath, and Lucas Greza with the National Energy Technology Laboratory, and Tom King with Oak Ridge National Laboratory. And we also are going to try to bring back up Zhanna Yermakov that we had tried to bring on earlier. I know she was having some audio issues. So hopefully she can hear us this time.

All right. And so waiting, holding tight to see if there are any attendee questions. So give us just a moment. Let some questions come in.

Or if any of you all have some information that you would like to share that maybe Dave didn't touch on or you want to elaborate on, feel free to take this moment while we let the questions come in here. Do you all have anything you think that the attendees need to know?

TOM KING: I think one thing just to clarify, Dave had mentioned new applications are due June 17. Those that have existing applications, they do need to claim their funds by that same date as well. So that's just additional clarification that's noted in the chat as well.

WHITNEY BELL: All right. Well, it seems you did a phenomenal job explaining everything. And there are no questions from the audience as of now, which is great. But if you guys do think of something, please let us know. But otherwise, we will go ahead and wrap up today's webinar.

So as we mentioned earlier, a copy of today's slides will be available on the webinars web page by Monday, and the recording will be available on that same page in about two weeks. We will send you an email when that is available, and we'll put the link to the place in the chat now.

And then for additional details or to contact the program team if you have any questions that you think of that you couldn't think of right now, feel free to go to the website. They'll be here in the chat. It's [www.energy.gov/gdo/gridresilience](http://www.energy.gov/gdo/gridresilience), or email [gdotribalassistance@hq.doe.gov](mailto:gdotribalassistance@hq.doe.gov).

So thank you so much for willing to answer all the questions today and Dave for your presentation. That was really helpful. And thank you to all of our attendees participating. Take care, everyone, and we'll see you next time.