

Nebraska Electric Grid Resilience Grant Program

The State of Nebraska is expected to receive an allocation of approximately \$5.4 million each year for five years under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to enhance the resilience and reliability of the electric grid.

These funds will be issued through the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Grid Deployment Office and administered by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) to eligible entities. DOE requires a portion of the grant to be set aside for small utilities.



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Section 40101 of the IIJA lists eligible projects as activities, technologies, equipment, and hardening measures to reduce the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events. Construction of new electric generating facilities and transmission lines with new routes are excluded. Cybersecurity projects are similarly excluded.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

This new program administered by NDEE will be distributed through a competitive award process. Eligible subgrantees include electric grid operators, electricity storage operators, electricity generators, transmission owners or operators, distribution providers, and fuel suppliers. Recipients are expected to complete the project within five years of award.

Subgrantees will be required to provide a cost match. The cost match required by the subgrantee is at least 115% of the grant amount for a utility that sells more than 4 million MWh a year, and at least 48.33% of the grant amount for a utility that sells 4 million MWh or less a year. A maximum award limit will be established to ensure that multiple projects can be funded each year.

OBJECTIVES FOR YEAR 1 AND YEAR 2

Objectives for the first and second year of the grant program include:

Rebuild and Restore

- Upgrading existing power poles by restoring, strengthening, or replacing current power poles.
- Rebuilding aged transmission and distribution lines and undergrounding of electrical equipment and powerlines.
- Upgrading substations with new equipment that may reduce the risk of electrical outages while meeting the current and future needs of changing communities.

Protect from Weather Related Events

- Weatherizing electric generation equipment and utilization of freeze protection methods and technologies.
- Hardening of electric system components to help withstand extreme heat, cold, and severe storms.
- Managing vegetation to protect power lines.

Adaptive Protection Technology

- Acquiring Adaptive Protection Technology-Smart Grid. Real-time monitoring of electrical parameters and condition of critical components enables the system to adjust to an optimal state. This could be critical to respond to rapidly changing system conditions due to generation and transmission outages and weather changes.

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Recruitment and Retention of Workforce

- Creating apprenticeships and jobs.
- Offering continued training to acquire and maintain qualified electric energy technology workers.

Economic and Environmental Benefit to Disadvantaged Communities

- Completing grid improvement projects that reduce the number and duration of power outages in communities with lower median income, aged and disabled populations.



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ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Subgrantees will be required to supply quantitative metrics they will use to track the proposed project after completion. Metric examples include number of substations hardened; miles of power lines reconducted; average restoration time following outages; SAIDI, SAIFI and other reliability indices; and number of energy sector jobs created.

Subgrantees must also comply with federal requirements including Buy America for construction materials and Davis-Bacon Act. Projects will also have to pass a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review.

CRITERIA

Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate the greatest community benefit. Other criteria include reasonableness of budget, project schedule, and demonstrative need for financial assistance. Special consideration may be given to projects in disadvantaged communities and to projects that add energy technology jobs and training. NDEE is committed to funding projects that benefit both rural and urban communities.

GRANT AND APPLICATION TIMELINE

NDEE will submit the state application to the DOE by March 31, 2023. Following approval of the state application, NDEE will finalize program requirements and establish a timeline for accepting, reviewing, and awarding subgrantee applications.

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC FEEDBACK

NDEE will receive public comments regarding the Nebraska Grid Resiliency Grant Program for 10 days following the Public Hearing on March 7, 2023. Comments can be submitted at the public hearing or sent to NDEE by mail or email.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Grid Resiliency Grant Program information will be updated on NDEE's website: dee.ne.gov. Correspondence can be sent to Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, 245 Fallbrook Blvd, Ste. 100, Lincoln, Nebraska 68521, or email: NDEE.gridresiliency@nebraska.gov.