

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - SECTION 40101(d)
PREVENTING OUTAGES AND ENHANCING THE RESILIENCE OF THE ELECTRIC GRID

Tribe Name
Applicant Name
Submitted: November 18, 2022

Program Narrative

The Program Narrative is provided by [applicant name], as the officially designated applicant for [name] Indian Tribe, as part of the application for funding under the U.S. Department of Energy's IJA Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid Formula Grant Program.

1. Objectives and Metrics:

The Tribal Council, in consultation with its members, has established the following objectives and supporting metrics to guide decisions involving resilience investments made in conjunction with this grant.

Objective #1: Ensure that critical community facilities serving the Tribe's members are not impacted by events such as extreme weather conditions, fire or other events causing disruption to normal grid operations. Critical facilities include rural health care facilities, nursing home, dialysis center and community buildings.

Metrics (Provisional):

- Frequency (occurrences per year) of electricity service disruptions of one hour or more to critical facilities
- Number of hours/days critical facilities are closed due to lack of electricity
- Number of workers trained to operate and maintain the resilience project once completed

Objective #2: Address energy burden experienced by low-income Tribe members and disadvantaged Tribal communities that experience frequent disruptions to electricity service by assuring a more reliable electricity service. Burdens are caused by frequent power outages resulting from inadequate electricity distribution infrastructure.

Metrics (Provisional):

- Frequency (occurrences per year) of electricity service disruptions of one hour or more to residences and businesses
- Number of occurrences within a community impacted by power outages of one hour or more in any year

Objective #3: Increase the skilled workforce within the Tribe by assuring that any installed resilience measures can be operated and maintained by Tribe members and businesses, where possible.

Metrics (Provisional):

- Number of Tribe members trained to operate and maintain grid resilience projects
- Number of Tribe-owned businesses that develop capacity to install, operate and/or maintain grid resilience projects
- Development of apprenticeship and Indian vocational training program in collaboration with the Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP)

Objective #4: Address other outdated and/or failing energy infrastructure items and materials (i.e., power lines, power poles, transformers, bucket trucks, etc.) serving Tribal communities. These outdated and/or failing items and materials add to the volatility of the electric grid infrastructure and to the frequency of power outages and infrastructure failures experienced by the Tribe.

Metrics (Provisional):

- Frequency (occurrences per year) of electricity service disruptions of one hour or more to critical facilities and/or residences and businesses
- Number of components and systems replaced or hardened
- Number of hours/days critical facilities are closed due to lack of electricity
- Average age of item and/or material used in current electric grid operation (by category)
- Depreciation value of item and/or material used in current electric grid operation
- Added value to the electric grid infrastructure with the addition of more modern and energy-efficient materials

Objective #5: Invest in modernization of the grid infrastructure, enabling consumer access to lower-cost energy, all while investing in clean energy and decarbonization solutions that align with the Biden Administration's Justice40 Initiative. This evolution of the grid infrastructure will also create new, good-paying employment opportunities and empower the Tribe to diversify their energy needs moving forward.

Metrics (Provisional):

- Number of jobs created following the investment in modernizing the grid infrastructure
- Number of Tribe-owned businesses created to develop/maintain the modernized grid infrastructure
- Number of training programs developed to advance the workforce in Tribal communities.

2. Criteria:

Top priority will be given to resilience projects that:

- benefit the most Tribal members,
- best serve low-income and energy-burdened Tribe members,
- best advance the economic vitality of the Tribe through sustaining or creating good-paying jobs and creating opportunities for new economic development
- addresses [a specific disruptive event, such as, wildfires for this specific Tribe] in which the region has experiences significant impacts

The development and selection of grid resilience projects will be done in consultation with the Tribes membership to assure an open and inclusive process.

The Tribe is served by a small rural electric cooperative electricity utility that sells less than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year. Projects that involve improvements to the grid infrastructure owned by that utility will be implemented in partnership with that utility. The Tribe would expect the utility to contribute the required 1/3 cost match required for small utilities.

3. Methods:

The Tribe anticipates partnering with the rural electric cooperative utility that serves the Tribal members and businesses to implement grid resilience measures. Due to its limited administrative and technical capacity, the Tribe may choose to use part of the 5% allowance for technical assistance and administrations costs, as well as its 15% cost match on the Federal allocation to engage a third-party entity to assist with awarding and managing subawards and assisting with grant administration on behalf of the Tribe.

4. Funding Distribution:

The Tribe anticipates satisfying the 15 percent match requirement using in-kind contributions associated with technical and administration expenses incurred by the Tribe, primarily personnel and fringe costs. The technical and administration costs include personnel expenses related to project management, accounting, grant reporting, and grant administration.

The Tribe anticipates partnering with the rural electric cooperative utility that serves the Tribal members and businesses. This utility sells less than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year. Accordingly, the cost match requirement for a qualifying small utility is 1/3 of the Federal share of the cost of that project. The Tribe would expect that the utility would provide the match through cash or in-kind contributions in accordance with grant requirements. This will be verified when projects are planned, and sub-agreements are negotiated.

5. Equity Approach:

It is important to the Tribe that all members have equal access to affordable and reliable electricity service. It is also important to the Tribe that none of its members bear a disproportionately high burden for that service in terms of rates or environmental and social impacts from the energy infrastructure. Accordingly, the Tribe will ensure that all projects are planned and implemented in a manner that promotes fairness to all of its members and neighboring communities. The stated objective of improving resilience of critical facilities is of most importance to low-income and under-served communities and members. They rely on services provided at these facilities for health care, emergency shelter, elderly care, and other essential services. When these facilities are inoperable due to disruptions to electricity service, essential services are either not available or require excessive travel and cost to obtain. These facilities also provide life-saving services, which when disrupted, could have life-threatening consequences. The Tribe will prioritize projects that provide the greatest impact to the most people relying on those services.

The Tribe will adhere to all terms and conditions of the grant agreement, including those that pertain to wages, American-made products and a free and fair choice to join or form a union. Additionally, training for Tribal members will be incorporated into these programs to obtain education and certification(s), thereby supporting the Tribe's economy through promoting a well-trained workforce. This well-trained workforce will ensure the viability of the electric grid infrastructure and its components moving forward.

6. Technical Assistance and Administration:

The Tribe will make use of the five percent allowance of the Federal allocation, as well as meet the 15 percent cost match of the Federal allocation, and either use its employees or a third-party to provide project management, accounting, grant reporting and grant administration. Examples of specific administrative requirements related to this grant opportunity will include:

- Preparing and publicizing the solicitation for subaward,
- Weekly collection/submission of payroll documents,
- Quarterly reporting documents (including collecting data from the sub awardee) and
- Annual applications for continued grant funding.

7. Public Notice and Hearing:

Notice of a public hearing was released on October 10, 2022, via the Tribe's social media platforms, email list, and placed in multiple newspapers. Personal messages were sent to key stakeholders with a request to share the Notice with any/all of their relevant contacts. The Notice of Public Hearing is provided as Attachment 01 to this Program Narrative.

The Public Hearing was held on November 10, 2022 (6-7:30 pm, EST). The hearing was also offered via Zoom for those wanting to participate but were not able to physically attend. The hearing was attended by 24 individuals:

- 16 Tribe Members
- Tribal Health Clinic Manager
- Representative from the Rural Electric Cooperative
- Representative from Governor's Office
- Representative from Tribe's Legal Council
- Representative from County Commissioner's Office

The Tribe shared the provisional objectives and associated metrics with the attendees and included discussion on a multi-year resiliency plan. The draft criteria listed above were shared and discussed with attendees. The Tribe also shared the desired outcomes and estimated cost for the program. The Tribal Council agreed to conduct another public notice and hearing once the grant is awarded and specific projects are considered in accordance with the stated objectives of this Program Narrative.