

Applications Open: May 2, 2022

Application Submission Deadline:

June 14, 2022, at 12:00 p.m.

Award Announcement Date: August 11, 2022

Amount of Funding: \$2,500,000

Minimum Grant: \$10,000

Maximum Grant: \$1,000,000

Average Grant Size: \$250,000

Ideal Grant Size: \$150,000 - \$300,000

Program Officer:

Amber Buckingham

iecgrants@iowaeda.com

515.348.6222

Important Notes:

The Iowa Energy Center Grant Program's administrative rules can be found in Iowa Administrative Code section 261.404. You may also request a copy of the administrative rules by sending an email to iecgrants@iowaeda.com.

PURPOSE

The Iowa Energy Center (IEC) competitive grant program is funded by gas and electric utilities across the state of Iowa and is administered by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Funds will be used for projects that aid in the implementation of the seven key focus areas of the Iowa Energy Plan and provide a benefit to Iowa ratepayers. For the purposes of this program, a ratepayer is defined as a customer who pays for an electric or natural gas utility service in the state of Iowa. The seven key focus areas of the Iowa Energy Plan are:

- Technology-based Energy Research and Development
- Natural Gas Expansion in Underserved Areas
- Support for Rural and Underserved Areas
- Energy Workforce Development
- Biomass Conversion
- Electric Grid Modernization
- Alternative Fuel Vehicles

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Iowa businesses, colleges and universities, and private nonprofit agencies and foundations are eligible to apply.
- An eligible applicant may submit an application that includes one or more sub-recipients.
- An eligible applicant may apply individually or jointly with other eligible applicants.
- An eligible applicant may apply jointly with ineligible applicants, but the eligible applicant must be performing the majority of the grant activities and cannot act solely as a passthrough to the ineligible entity.
- A principal investigator will be allowed to submit one application per funding announcement. An applicant who has applied as the principal investigator for a funding announcement may also be named as a co-investigator on additional applications submitted but may not be named as a principal investigator on additional applications.
- A business will be considered an Iowa business if it is incorporated in the state of Iowa or authorized to do business in the state of Iowa.
 - A business that is authorized to do business in the state of Iowa must provide a certificate of authority during the full application phase.
 - Applicant organization must have a physical location within Iowa at the time of application. The majority of funds used for salaries and wages (51%) must be used for Iowa-based employees of the applicant organization.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- Applications with project partners are preferred by the review committee.
- If project partners are named in the full application, a letter of support must be provided.
 - Project partners will be evaluated and scored based upon the relevance of the partnership to the goals of the project. Please see the scoring criteria in the full application scoring sheet in this handbook for further information regarding partnership points.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for IEC grant awards include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Applicants shall demonstrate a benefit for ratepayers.
- Applicants shall demonstrate that they are eligible candidates.
- Applicants must demonstrate that they have the capacity for grants administration.
- Applicants who have previously received Iowa Energy Center awards shall have demonstrated acceptable past performance, including the timely expenditure of funds.
- An applicant may apply jointly with ineligible applicants, but the applicant must be performing the majority of the grant activities and cannot act solely as a passthrough to the ineligible entity.
- Applicants must demonstrate the feasibility of completing the proposed activities with the funds requested.
- Applicants shall identify and describe any other sources of funding for the proposed activities.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

IEC grant funds cannot be used to fund the following types of projects:

- Relocation of business
- Expansion of a business
- Funding for existing training programs
 - Training programs that continue a previously (or soon to be) discontinued program or develop training in new areas of an existing training program may be eligible.
- Private asset development
 - Examples of private asset development include:
 - Installation of a solar array on a building only to benefit the owners/occupants of that building
 - Research and development used to primarily enable the manufacturing of a product solely for the profit of the applicant
 - Installation of equipment to benefit only one community or neighborhood with no opportunity for replicability outside of the applicant organization (i.e., community solar array or community LED light installation)
- Pipeline, transmission line and distribution line construction
- First generation ethanol
- Cellulosic ethanol

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Only expenditures directly related to the implementation of the funded grant activity will be reimbursed. Examples of eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries/wages
- Supplies and materials
- Domestic travel
- Tuition
- Equipment purchases, which must be approved by the board at the time the award is made
- Vehicle purchases, which are eligible only when the purchase of the vehicle is an integral part of the funded grant activity and must be approved by the board at the time the award is made

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

IEC grant funds cannot be used for the following expenses:

- Purchase or rental of buildings
- Office equipment
- Furniture and fixtures
- Intangible assets
- International travel
- Insurance
- Phone expenses

OTHER BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

- Indirect costs shall not exceed more than 20% of the IEC grant award request.
- IEC grant funds cannot be used as cost share to a federal grant award.
- Vehicle purchases or other vehicle-related expenses are not eligible if the purchase or expense supports the proposed grant activity but is not an integral part of the proposed grant activity. If a vehicle purchase is an integral part of the grant activity but a recipient fails to obtain board approval prior to the purchase, then the vehicle purchase is ineligible.
- For projects where a co-investigator or sub-recipient is named, a minimum of 51% of grant funds must be directed to activities performed by the recipient organization.
- The final application award request cannot increase more than 5% from the award request identified in the pre-application, unless a more substantial deviation is requested by the grant committee during the pre-application review.

COST SHARE

- Cost share is required to apply for IEC grant funds
- Minimum cost-share is 5%
 - In-kind donations can be used as cost share.
 - Cost share for Iowa based business applicants must include a monetary cost share contribution if supplies, materials or equipment are included in the budget (10% of these line items). This monetary cost share must be accounted for on the supplies, materials and equipment line items.
- Example: Applicant includes the purchase/ installation of batteries in their project budget under the equipment line item, at a cost of \$20,000. The total IEC grant award request is \$200,000. The applicant would be required to provide a total of \$10,000 in cost-share (5% of \$200,000), of which, \$2,000 must be a monetary cost share contribution (10% of the \$20,000 equipment line item).
- If cost share requirements are not met, the application will be disqualified.
- Applicants do have the opportunity to obtain extra points if they provide or secure additional cost share.
- Unrecovered indirect costs cannot be used as cost share. However, matching indirect costs can be counted as cost share (not to exceed 20% of the total project budget).
- Cost share must be accounted for at the pre-application phase.
 - If an applicant obtains additional cost share after being selected for a full application, they must receive approval from the grant committee to include the additional cost share in the budget in the final application.
- Points awarded for cost share will be based on the total grant award request (5.1%-20.1%).

HOW TO APPLY

Applications will only be accepted during the established application period, as identified in IowaGrants and at iowaeda.com

INFORMATION NEEDED TO APPLY

- Applicant contact information
- Project team
 - Name, organization and experience of all team members
- Certificate of Authority (if applicable)
- Project summary
 - Project description
 - Short project summary (100 characters)
 - Statement of need or problem (1,000 characters)
 - New or creative approach (500 characters)
 - Relevance to key focus area of Iowa Energy Plan (1,000 characters)
 - Benefit of the proposal for Iowa ratepayers (1,000 characters)
 - Project goals to be reached by project end (1,500 characters)
 - Staff and programmatic capabilities
 - Staff roles and responsibilities as they relate to project goals (1,000 characters)
 - Procedures or controls for ensuring that awarded funds will be used in a timely and efficient manner in order to successfully complete proposed activities (500 characters)
 - Dissemination plan and post-grant activities
 - Describe how or if the benefits of the project can or will be replicated by outside entities after grant completion (1,000 characters)
 - Describe the dissemination plan for post-grant activities in detail (1,500 characters)
 - Timeline
 - Provide a timeline with project tasks and milestones in chronological order. The timeline must include a target completion date. As part of the section, please provide the quantitative and/or qualitative measure that will be used to document the completion of each task or milestone.
- Budget
 - Please provide a budget by year, and include any matching contributions for the project.
 - Please provide a detailed budget narrative (2,000 characters)
 - External/Cost share overview (500 characters)
- Other attachments
 - Please upload any letters of support or additional supplemental documents.

FULL APPLICATION PROCESS

- The grant committee will invite selected applicants to submit a full application, which will be completed via IowaGrants. The program manager will communicate the application submission deadlines and other application details to selected applicants via the email provided during the pre-application process. The program manager will be responsible for all communication to selected applicants and will serve as the point of contact for applicants.
- Once the submission deadline has closed, the program manager will review the applications for eligibility and completeness.
- Internal IEDA staff will then review the applications and prepare recommendations for the grant committee. Internal IEDA staff included in the review may include:
 - Grant program manager
 - Other Iowa Energy Office program managers
 - Team leader
 - Legal counsel
 - Financial manager
- An outside technical review panel may be utilized for application reviews when IEDA staff and/or grant committee members feel it is necessary. This may delay the published timeline.
- IEDA staff will prepare a recommendation for the grant committee, which will review all the applications and make a recommendation to the full board. The grant committee will score the applications together and provide one scoring sheet for each application.
- The program manager will summarize the applications and grant committee recommendations for the board.
- The board will review all applications and the recommendations from the grant committee and vote on each application.
- Applicants selected to receive grant funds will be notified in writing within 15 days of the board's decision. Applicants not selected will receive a denial letter.

REVIEW CRITERIA FOR FULL APPLICATION

Full Application Screening Criteria

Includes all of the pre-application requirements, plus:

- Indirect cost request does not exceed 20% of the total award request
- For projects where a co-investigator or sub-recipient is named, a minimum of 51% of grant funds must be directed to activities performed by the recipient organization
- Application identifies any other sources of funding for proposed activities
- Award request cannot increase more than 5% from the award request identified in the pre-application, unless a more substantial deviation is requested by the grant committee
- Applicants must account for all cost share in the pre-application phase unless permission is granted by the grant committee
- Certificate of Authority has been provided if necessary
- If sub-recipients or project partners are named in the application, a letter of support or commitment must be provided

FULL APPLICATION SCORING SHEET

Applicants must achieve a minimum score of 150 to be considered for funding.

Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points
Focus Area and Ratepayer Benefit	Does the proposal explain the benefit it will provide to Iowa ratepayers?	5
	Does the benefit appear to be sound and reasonable?	15
	Does the proposal meet at least one of the seven key focus areas? Key focus areas: Technology-based energy research and development Natural gas expansion in underserved areas Support for rural and underserved areas Energy workforce development Biomass conversion Electric grid modernization Alternative fuel vehicles	5
	Does the fulfillment of the key focus area seem sound and reasonable?	10
Programmatic Capabilities	Does the proposal provide information regarding organizational experience, staff qualifications, and procedures and controls for ensuring that awarded grant funds will be used in a timely and efficient manner in order to successfully complete proposed activities?	5
	Has the applicant received previous Iowa Energy Center awards? If no, applicant will receive 5 pts. If yes, did applicant expend grant funds in a timely manner and comply with reporting requirements? If yes, applicant will receive up to 5 pts based on past performance.	5
Project Approach, Outcomes and Deliverables	Does the proposal describe the applicant's project goals to be reached by project end?	5
	Are the project goals described in clear, easy to understand language?	10
	Do the project goals appear reasonable?	10
	Does the proposal describe the timeline, project tasks and milestones of the project (in chronological order)?	5
	Do the project tasks appear reasonable? Are there an appropriate number of tasks relative to the length and cost of the project?	10
	Does the proposal define the qualitative and/or quantitative measures the applicant will use to document the achievement of the goals of the project? Do the measures appear to be reasonable?	8
	Does the proposal satisfy a need or a problem?	10
	Does the proposal demonstrate a new or novel approach to a need or a problem?	5
	Does the proposal differentiate itself from previously funded Iowa Energy Center projects?	7
	Does the proposal define the staff roles and responsibilities in the scope of work?	3
Budget and Budget Narrative	Does the proposal demonstrate that the project is feasible within the resources requested?	10
	Is the budget narrative complete, reasonable and sound?	10

Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Total Points
Dissemination and Replication	Does the proposal provide a clear dissemination or post-grant plan that is relevant to the goals of the project? Is the dissemination plan appropriate for the post-grant period?	5
	Does proposal demonstrate that the benefits of the project can be replicated by outside entities after grant completion?	10
Cost Share	Does the proposal indicate that the project has received either cost share funding match or external funding? This score will be calculated based on the award request. 5.1% - 10% - 2 pts 10.1 - 15% - 5 pts 15.1 - 20% - 10 pts 20.1% + - 15pts	15
Collaboration	Does the proposal demonstrate they are collaborating with other relevant partner organizations?	10
	Does the proposal demonstrate they are collaborating with another relevant eligible applicant(s)?	5

APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

- May 2, 2022 – The grant program managers will invite selected applicants to submit a full application and will also send denial letters to applicants that were not selected to move forward.
- Pre-applicants selected to submit a full application will complete and submit their applications via IowaGrants prior to the submission deadline. The program manager will communicate application submission information to selected applicants via the email address provided during the pre-application process.
- Once the application submission window closes, IEDA staff will review the applications and prepare recommendations for the grant committee.
- The grant committee will review the applications and prepare recommendations for the Iowa Energy Center Board, who will then review the recommendations and vote on each application at an Iowa Energy Center Board meeting.
- August 11, 2022 – Applicants selected to receive grant funding will be notified in writing of the board’s decision. Applicants not selected will receive a denial letter.