



**Call for Partners for the Federal Highway Administration's
Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Program**

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Released: Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Deadline to Submit Questions: Friday, June 28, 2024

If Warranted, FAQ Document Will Be Posted by: Wednesday, July 3, 2024

Proposals Due: Wednesday, July 10, 3:00 p.m. Central

Overview

The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (CFI Program) is a \$2.5 billion competitive grant program created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to strategically deploy publicly accessible electric vehicle charging and alternative fueling infrastructure. This program provides two grant funding categories: (1) Community Charging and Fueling Grants (Community Program); and (2) Alternative Fuel Corridor Grants (Corridor Program).

The CFI Round 2 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) offers up to \$1.3 billion in funding for new applications and for previously submitted applications. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) is issuing this competitive Call for Partners to solicit proposals from private organizations and other partners interested in the Corridor Program in FHWA's current round of competitive funding. This Call for Partners is not soliciting partners for the Community Program category.

Corridor Program grants are expected to support the buildout of charging infrastructure along designated Alternative Fuel Corridors (AFCs).

As such, with this Call for Partners (CFP), IEPA is seeking interest from qualified and eligible private organizations interested in partnering with IEPA on CFI Program efforts under the Corridor Program category.

Interested parties should review the current CFI Program NOFO¹ in its entirety before responding to this CFP. This solicitation does not require IEPA to select any Partners solicited through this process. IEPA may pursue any projects solicited through this Call for Partners, any other projects, or none at all.

Proposals are due to EPA.EVCharging@Illinois.gov by Wednesday, July 10, 3:00 p.m. Central.

Program Background

IEPA efforts in this sector are supported by the State of Illinois' comprehensive energy legislation, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, which:

- Incentivizes renewable energy development
- Accelerates electric vehicle (EV) adoption and expands charging station infrastructure
- Creates statewide clean energy workforce training programs to ensure our workforce is prepared for the jobs of the future
- Equitably supports communities facing energy transitions and much more

¹ [https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/354602#:~:text=related%20document\(s\)%3A-.File%20Description,-File%20Name](https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/354602#:~:text=related%20document(s)%3A-.File%20Description,-File%20Name)

Eligible Projects

Corridor Program

For the Corridor Program, the charging project should expand deployment of public DC fast charge EV charging infrastructure along FHWA-designated AFCs that would enable or accelerate the construction of charging infrastructure. IEPA is interested specifically in proposals that advance charging infrastructure buildout for medium/heavy-duty use cases.

Applications should address one of the following focus areas:

- (1) demonstrate build-out of AFCs by expanding existing or adding new charging infrastructure;
- (2) enable zero-emission corridors for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles that will enable zero emission movement of goods, connecting distribution hubs and population centers;
- (3) promote reliability and resiliency to intermittent or sustained power outages or extreme weather events.

The following regulations apply for this Call for Partners:

- Projects should propose to build zero-emission charging corridors for medium- and heavy-duty electric vehicles.
- EV charging infrastructure should be conveniently and safely located as close to the AFC as possible, and, in general, no greater than five miles from Interstate exits or highway intersections along designated AFCs.
- The proposed infrastructure should be publicly accessible 24/7.

Required Documents

Proposals from any qualified and eligible private organization or other entity interested in partnering with IEPA for the CFI Program shall be no more than ten pages total, excluding any maps/photos addenda.

Applications should include:

- Project narrative documenting the following:
 - Details of the project location
 - Public accessibility of project
 - Outcomes from stakeholder collaborative engagement
- Budget information, including proposed federal request, proposed match amount, and where the match amount would come from.
- Project readiness and environmental risk assessment information.
 - Information that, when considered with the project budget information, is sufficient for IEPA to evaluate whether the project is reasonably expected to begin in a timely manner and obligate and expend funding before award deadlines.
 - The expected or anticipated environmental impacts of the project.

- Letter of Partnership on organization letterhead stipulating the contact information of the organization’s project lead
- Partnership Proposal detailing:
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Organizational interest in this CFI program and zero-emission implementation efforts in general
 - Any relevant past/current zero-emission infrastructure planning efforts
 - Any relevant past/current zero-emission infrastructure implementation efforts
 - Grant-writing support your organization can bring to the Partnership
- Documentation of how your application meets all evaluation criteria in this Call for Partners

Evaluation

Evaluation for this Call for Partners shall be based on the following criteria:

- Federal Eligibility (including SAM.gov registration)
- Completeness of proposal
- Likelihood of project success based on factors such as experience of project team and division of roles and responsibilities
- Demonstrated ability to provide matching funds
- Availability of grant-writing capacity and other resources
- Readiness of project to meet deadlines of the CFI Program
- Matching funds percentage
- Ability to provide grant-writing support
- Project reduces congestion at existing charging infrastructure at high-traffic corridor locations
- Project enables the construction of charging at a location that would unlikely be completed without federal assistance
- Project targets medium and heavy-duty vehicle charging

Project Merit Criteria:

- Safety
- Climate Change, Resilience, and Sustainability
- Equity, Community Engagement, and Justice 40
- Workforce Development, Job Quality, and Wealth Creation
- CFI Program Vision

Additional Considerations include improving the alternative fueling corridor network, supporting a long-term competitive market for charging, building in an area unlikely to be built without Federal assistance, building out charging in support of nearby coastal or inland port facilities, geographic diversity among awardees, project team expertise, and program design.

Questions

Please submit any questions at your earliest convenience to EPA.EVCharging@Illinois.gov. The deadline to submit questions is Friday, June 28, 2024.

Submission

Applicants should not submit any sensitive information. Applications may be a public record to the extent required by law.

Interested Partners shall submit their application to EPA.EVCharging@Illinois.gov by Wednesday, July 10, 3:00 p.m. Central.

Subsequent Steps

IEPA anticipates forming a committee comprised of employees from multiple state agencies to complete a review of any proposals received from this Call for Partners. That committee will meet after the close of this Call for Partners to determine which, if any, proposals the State of Illinois will be advancing onto the federal application portion of this process.

IEPA may request additional information from applicants throughout the review process.

Additional Information

Selection through this CFP is not a guarantee of funding, but instead indicates that the selected Partner may proceed in competitive grant proposal(s) to U.S. DOT. Funding is contingent on any U.S. DOT award(s) and conditions surrounding any award(s). IEPA will work in conjunction with any selected Partner to refine the proposal(s) based on what CFI Program application materials require. Selected Partner(s) will have an opportunity to re-confirm their commitment/participation prior to IEPA submitting any grant applications.

Any Partner selected to move forward to the federal application phase of this process will be required to participate in writing and developing the federal application. IEPA is not expecting to engage a grant writer for developing this application.

As applicable, any applicant entity will be required to comply with federal, state, or local laws, regulations, and other requirements and be required to obtain all necessary permits and clearances.