Power Ahead Colorado

Community Engagement Grant Program

Questions and Answers

This document compiles questions received during the English and Spanish informational webinars on October 8, 2026 and through the program email inbox. Questions appear as submitted; questions asked in Spanish appear in English translation.

Key Clarification

Based on feedback received, grant awards will be structured as fixed-price milestone agreements. **There are no changes to the Solicitation, application, budget requirements, or application process.** Following award selection, we will work with selected applicants to establish project milestones and associated payment amounts based on their proposed activities and submitted budgets. Applicants do not need to develop milestones as part of their applications.

Eligibility

Q1. Can jurisdictions apply?

A: Eligible applicants are incorporated non-profit community based organizations. This program was designed to support CBOs. There have been 2 rounds of jurisdictional or city based grants through the Building Policy Collaborative. City or jurisdictional based applicants could be a sub to a different prime when and if appropriate.

Q2. Are cities eligible to apply?

A: Eligible applicants are incorporated non-profit community based organizations. This program was designed to support CBOs. There have been 2 rounds of jurisdictional or city based grants through the Building Policy Collaborative. City or jurisdictional based applicants could be a sub to a different prime when and if appropriate.

[The following questions are grouped as they all have the same answer]

Q3. Can you clarify if private companies can apply as the prime applicant?
Q4. Are "for profit" organizations, grounded in community, eligible?
Q5. Is the grant open only to CBOs/ non-profits or also to for profit businesses?
Q12. Can non-profit organizations partner with an LLC (company)?

A: Eligible applicants are incorporated nonprofit community-based organizations, as outlined on page 6 of the Solicitation. While other Power Ahead Colorado funding opportunities, like the Building Policy Collaborative and the Innovation Grant Program, have focused prior grant cycles on for-profit entities and partner jurisdictions, this grant program is specifically designed to support community-based organizations and their connections to the communities they serve.

Applicants may partner with other organizations, including for-profit entities, to carry out proposed activities as appropriate. However, the lead applicant must meet the program's eligibility requirements and remain responsible for the proposed project. We encourage applicants to consider how their partnerships contribute to the project's goals, leverage the strengths of each organization, and

demonstrate a reasonable and cost-effective use of grant funds. Project feasibility and budget are among the criteria used to evaluate applications.

Q6. [Organization name] is exploring an application focused on helping students and community members discover electrification careers and connect with local training and workforce opportunities. Two questions:

1. **[Organization name] is a Colorado educational for-profit company with a charitable fiscal sponsor located within a DRCOG member jurisdiction. We provide our programs free of charge to schools and community organizations. Are for-profit companies eligible to serve as the lead applicant?**
2. **May we partner with another Colorado for-profit company on the project. Are for-profit companies eligible project partners for purposes of the Partnering & Teaming criterion?**

A: Eligible applicants are incorporated nonprofit community-based organizations, as outlined on page 6 of the Solicitation. While other Power Ahead Colorado funding opportunities, like the Building Policy Collaborative and the Innovation Grant Program, have focused prior grant cycles on for-profit entities and partner jurisdictions, this grant program is specifically designed to support community-based organizations and their connections to the communities they serve.

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Q7. If we had an original EPA subaward in the Thriving Communities grant program (Biden era) that EPA terminated. Are we therefore ineligible?

A: Having previously received a grant or sub-award terminated in this case by the EPA does not in itself make your organization ineligible. You may apply if it meets all other eligibility requirements on page 6 of the solicitation.

Q8. You mentioned the grant is coming from DRCOG, and just to be clear, is some type of registration with DRCOG needed to participate?

A: No. We showed the DRCOG map and municipalities to show that proposals and activities for this grant need to take place within those boundaries.

Q9. Can you please let me know if these community engagement ideas might be valid for grant consideration?

- **Creation of a short film documenting high altitude cold-climate heat pump conversion from natural gas as home efficiency improvement in our mountain home at 11,250 feet in the Colorado Rockies.**
- **Create Colorado community events featuring film screenings and panel discussions with the short film that I create focusing on efficiency and efficacy of cold weather heat pumps event at high elevations in Colorado.**
- **Integrate 15 second Power Ahead Colorado video into my broadcast as underwriting video credit pod with my climate science film, [film title].**

A: To maintain a fair application process, we cannot advise prospective applicants on whether a specific project concept is viable, competitive, or likely to receive funding. We encourage you to review the eligibility requirements, program priorities, and evaluation criteria in the application materials and consider how your proposed project aligns with them.

Q10.

1. **The Eligibility section lists nonprofit organizations such as 501(c)(3)s as examples of eligible applicants. Are for-profit entities (e.g., LLCs or corporations) eligible to apply as the lead applicant?**
2. **If for-profit entities are not eligible as lead applicants, may they take part as subcontractors or project partners to an eligible lead, with their costs budgeted as "subcontractor or consultant services"?**
3. **The focus areas center on residents, homeowners, and workforce. Would outreach to commercial or multifamily building owners and managers (for example, explaining incentives and building performance requirements) fit the Education & Outreach or Incentives & Advising focus areas?**
4. **Are software subscriptions, data platforms, or digital tools used to deliver or track engagement activities an allowable cost?**

A:

1. No. See answer to questions 3, 4, 5,12.

2. Potentially, provided costs are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the proposed activities. The eligible lead applicant must remain responsible for overall project implementation, management of grant funds, and compliance with applicable grant requirements. Subcontractors and consultants must also comply with applicable contractual requirements.

3. Yes.

4. Such costs may be allowable if they are necessary for carrying out the proposed project activities. All proposed budget expenses will be reviewed for cost reasonableness, necessity, and direct connection to the project. Applicants should explain how the proposed tool will be used for the project and why it is needed. General organizational software expenses that cannot be directly attributed to the proposed project may not qualify as direct costs.

Q11. I wanted to ask if organizations operating under a fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity

A:

Yes. Organizations operating under a fiscal sponsor may apply, provided the fiscal sponsor meets all eligibility requirements outlined in the Solicitation. The fiscal sponsor would serve as the lead applicant and legal recipient of the grant funds, assuming responsibility for financial management, oversight, and compliance with applicable grant requirements. The sponsored organization may carry out the proposed project activities under this arrangement.

Partnering & Teaming

Q10. I am with a volunteer organization called [organization name]. It is a national organization with local chapters. We provide neighbor-to-neighbor support and technical assistance to those interested in electrifying their homes (our focus is broader than heat pumps). We are beginning a new initiative and wonder if Power Ahead Colorado would partner with us by lending your brand as an endorsement for our effort?

A: To keep the grant application process fair and equitable, we do not want to advise prospective applicants on whether a concept is viable or competitive. We encourage everyone to review the eligibility requirements available through the grant solicitation.

Q11. In terms of partnerships & teaming: Do both organizations need to be eligible for award, or can just the lead applicant be?

A: A lead applicant may apply on behalf of one or more otherwise eligible entities, such as incorporated nonprofit organizations, that may lack the capacity to apply and/or manage a full grant on their own. The lead applicant assumes all fiscal and programmatic responsibility for the grant, without regard to any arrangements the fiscal agent/sponsor has with the incorporated nonprofit organization. The lead applicant must meet all eligibility requirements and requirements of the award. All organizations participating in a teaming arrangement must meet the minimum required insurance coverage. A subrecipient/teaming partner must also be eligible to receive federal funds (pass suspension/debarment checks), adhere to applicable flow-down requirements found in the award, ensure access to financial records and follow the same indirect cost rules.

An entity that is ineligible such as a for-profit firm cannot arrange for an eligible entity to apply on their behalf as a “fiscal sponsor” or “fiscal agent” and then receive funding under a “sole source” noncompetitive procurement contract.

Q13. I have an LLC and work extensively with the community. If an organization applies for this grant and receives it, the funds go to the organization, and the organization would then have to pay me. Is that how it works?

A: Potentially, provided costs are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the proposed activities. The eligible lead applicant must remain responsible for overall project implementation, management of grant funds, and compliance with applicable grant requirements. Subcontractors and consultants must also comply with applicable contractual requirements.

Q14.

a. Can a nonprofit lead applicant subcontract part of the work to a for-profit partner, like a program management or workforce firm, and pay that partner from the grant budget?

b. Since milestones aren't part of this cycle, how do payments work? Is it reimbursement on invoice for actual costs, how quickly are invoices paid, and are advances available?

c. What does the readiness assessment review, and can a teaming partner's systems, like financial controls and reporting,

A: a. Potentially, provided costs are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to the proposed activities. The eligible lead applicant must remain responsible for overall project implementation, management of grant funds, and compliance with applicable grant requirements. Subcontractors and consultants must also comply with applicable contractual requirements.

b. Please see the correction at the top of this document. The intended awards will be fixed price milestones. Additionally, we may be able, on a case-by-case basis, to make pre-advance payments upon request. In such case we will work directly with the sub-awardee to make those arrangements.

c. The readiness assessment is undertaken by the prime applicant and helps us understand your organization's current systems, policies, and capacity to manage federal grant funds. Your responses will help identify any areas where additional guidance, documentation, or support may be needed to meet grant requirements and manage funds responsibly. The assessment is intended to support successful grant administration, not to evaluate your organization's mission, performance, or impact.

Q15. I thought that [program staff] mentioned that nonprofits were going to be able to share their contact information so that we could see if there are other organizations interested in collaborating. Our organization is [organization name] and we are interested in distributing our name so that we can develop contacts. How do we do that?

A: We will be posting on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement webpage the names of organizations who attended the webinar We will also email a list of any contacts that agreed to share their information to all webinar attendees.

Application Process

Q16. Are there word limits for responses provided in the grant application fields?

A: Yes, the application portal will limit you to 1,000 words per narrative response.

Q17.

a. When we start the application process, can we stop it and re-start it later at the same point, or do we need to finish in one sitting?

b. Can we get copies of the questions and fields in the application so we can prepare for when we get online?

A: a. You can stop and start. Once you register, you can close out and sign in anytime. Once you begin the application, once you click the 'Next' button at the bottom of the page, it saves that page. You can start and stop as many times as you need. If you want to navigate forward without filling in all required questions, you may insert a character in each response box to allow you to navigate forward to subsequent pages.

b. We will be providing a pdf version of the application for this very purpose, to be posted on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement webpage.

Q18. Is there a separate document that includes all of the application questions to enable working outside of the portal?

A: We will be providing a pdf version of the application for this very purpose, to be posted on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement webpage.

Q19. Could we get a list of all (~26) of the questions to help us draft and fill out the application online?

A: We will be providing a pdf version of the application for this very purpose, to be posted on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement webpage.

Q20. Can you publish the list of application questions so applicants can see before filling out?

A: We will be providing a pdf version of the application for this very purpose, to be posted on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement webpage.

Q21. Are there word limits in these responses to each question in the application we should be aware of?

A: Yes, the application portal will limit you to 1,000 words per narrative response.

Q22. Are there word or character limits in any of the application questions? Is there a limit to how many proposals can be submitted by one org.? Is there a limit on uploaded files? Will there be a place or opportunity to upload a budget narrative? Will there be places to upload Letters of Support and/or commitment?

A: Yes, the application portal will limit you to 1,000 words per narrative response.

We expect no more than one application per organization.

There is only one allowable file upload: budget sheet.

You may include budget narrative within the Excel budget sheet.

Letters of support/commitment are not requested nor required for this grant cycle.

Q23. Is there a limit to how many proposals one organization can submit?

Is there a limit on uploaded files? For instance:

Is there a place or opportunity to upload a budget narrative? Will there be places to upload Letters of Support and/or Commitment (from fiscally subcontracted partners)?

Can we get a list of all application Qs/prompts in the order they will appear in the application, so that we can prepare our responses before working in the portal?

A: We expect no more than one application per organization.

There is only one allowable file upload: budget sheet.

You may include budget narrative within the Excel budget sheet.

Letters of support are not requested nor required for this grant cycle.

We will be providing a pdf version of the application for this very purpose, to be posted on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement webpage.

Q24. Can we get a copy of all of the questions on the CE Application Pages so that we can prepare before we log in. This will help us include comments and feedback from all of our partners and help improve our application.

A: We will be providing a pdf version of the application for this very purpose, to be posted on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement webpage.

Budget, Labor & Payment

Q25. Will the grant cover labor costs?

A: Yes, the required budget may include direct labor costs required to perform the proposed activities.

Q26. Can labor be paid from grant dollars? For instance, paying people to distribute flyers?

A: Yes, the required budget may include direct labor costs required to perform the proposed activities.

Q27. Can the grant cover the labor costs of administration/reporting labor associated with the grant?

A: Yes, the required budget may include direct labor costs required to perform the proposed activities or grant requirements. Budgets must follow indirect cost rules listed on pages 8 and 9 of the solicitation.

Q28. For the budget sheet is it recommended to include your organization wide budget or how you plan to budget funds for this award specifically

A: Please only include the proposed grant project budget.

Q29. [Organization name] is considering an application focused on expanding access to HVAC careers. Our pathway includes personal development and skill development, including technical training and certification in the HVAC field. Participants then enter Career Launch, which focuses on supervised job search and securing employment before cohort graduation. We would appreciate clarification on five points before defining our scope and budget:

1. **May grant funds pay for contracted HVAC training and certification costs for participants reached through the project? Are there limits on which training or credentials qualify?**
2. **May a grantee charge the documented portion of career coaches' salaries spent supporting an HVAC participant caseload, including career navigation, job readiness, and employment support? Which activities would be allowable?**
3. **Can outreach that recruits participants into an applicant's HVAC career pathway qualify as community engagement, or must the project primarily connect people to Power Ahead Colorado programs such as the Green Workforce Hubs or Growth Access Programs?**
4. **Are events or ambassador programs required, or could an applicant use existing community relationships and recruitment channels with a defined outreach plan and measurable connections?**
5. **If a project combines outreach with training and coaching, may the approved scope and budget include all three, provided costs are allocated to the project and are not charged to other funding?**

A:

1. Please see pages 3 and 4 of the solicitation. This grant program is focused on community engagement and awarded projects will be community engagement efforts. These funds are not for training or certifications.
2. Please see pages 3 and 4 of the solicitation. This grant program is focused on community engagement and awarded projects will be community engagement efforts.
3. The funds of this grant program are intended to support community engagement efforts to Power Ahead Colorado programs.
4. Please see pages 3 and 4 of the solicitation. To maintain a fair application process, we cannot advise prospective applicants on whether a specific project concept is viable, competitive, or likely to receive funding. We encourage you to review the eligibility requirements, program goals, and evaluation criteria in the solicitation and consider how your proposed project aligns with them.
5. To maintain a fair application process, we cannot advise prospective applicants on whether a specific project concept is viable, competitive, or likely to receive funding. We encourage you to

review the eligibility requirements, program goals, and evaluation criteria in the solicitation and consider how your proposed project aligns with them.

Insurance

Q30. What are the insurance requirements to receive grant funding?

A: Applicants are not required to have minimum insurance coverage in place at the time of application. However, those selected for funding must obtain and maintain the insurance coverage required in the sub-award grant agreement prior to execution of the agreement and receipt of grant funds. Please see page 13 of the solicitation, as well as a one-pager on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement Grant Program webpage for more details.

Q31. If our type of community engagement is planning and information. (Awareness, education, resources), is the insurance for construction-type work still required?

A: Please see page 13 of the solicitation and the one-page overview available on the DRCOG Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement Grant Program webpage for additional details. All applicants selected for funding must meet these minimum requirements. However, waivers for certain requirements may be available under specific circumstances and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the solicitation and program resources for more information.

Program Scope, Data & Future Cycles

Q32. Is there an expectation for funds distributed to add to the available incentives in the market by creating new rebates for residents or purely focused on outreach efforts to raise awareness on existing rebates

A: This grant funding is focused on community engagement efforts for existing rebates.

Q33. Is round one geared toward individuals and/or businesses who are already considering a heat pump and have funding the will not require incentives and/or rebates?

A: This grant cycle is focused on increasing awareness about the Power Ahead Colorado programs, specifically: Rebates and Incentives, Workforce Development and Heat Pump Education.

Q34. Currently are the incentives and/or rebates available to those who may have limited funds for a heat pump?

A: The incentives are $1500 regardless of income. The energy advisors can help identify whether any other rebates are available in someone's area and whether those rebates make the heat pump an affordable option. The Comfort for All program, which provides retrofits for income-qualified households, has not rolled out yet.

Q35. Will awardees be provided a CRM that DRCOGS expects use of to monitor activities/engagement or is that something for awardees to determine need for in their own application?

A: Applicants are expected to determine their own need to effectively manage the proposed project.

Q36. Regarding the data we might collect from those participants, how would that data be handled—considering the involvement of federal funds and the need to protect the individuals and participants?

A: Selected applicants will need to adhere to all terms and conditions in the grant agreement, which include requirements related to Personally Identifiable Information (PII). The specific requirements will depend on the information collected and how it is used or stored. Applicants should be prepared to handle any personal information responsibly and in accordance with applicable requirements.

Q37. Can awardees in this cycle apply for additional funding in future cycles or is DRCOGS interested in new partners each cycle?

A: At this time, it is not determined. However, it is not anticipated that applicant eligibility will be limited to only one cycle of funding.

Q38. Will applicants be given feedback on how to improve their application for the next cycle if they are not selected this round?

A: Yes, feedback will be provided to applicants who do not proceed to funding in this cycle.