

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - SECTION 40101(d)

PREVENTING OUTAGES AND ENHANCING THE RESILIENCE OF THE ELECTRIC GRID

West Virginia West Virginia Resilience Planning Project March 1, 2024

Program Narrative

1. Objectives and Metrics:

The West Virginia Office of Energy (WVOE), the officially designated applicant for West Virginia, provides this program narrative 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 Five-Year Formula Grant Program.

The "West Virginia Resilience Planning Project" (WVRPP) will allow the state's investor-owned utilities and cooperatives to advance certain all-hazards approaches to eliminating customer outages across the state.

WVOE is committed to ensuring every West Virginia customer, no matter how rural, is adequately served with reliable electricity where electric infrastructure exists. No customer - no matter how remote - should be without power during disruptive events if electric lines, substations, and generation already exist for that customer. WVRPP will also allow for projects that accommodate increased electrification where feasible and necessary to reduce outage impacts.

In addition, the efforts undertaken under the Program should have alignment with the State Energy Security Plans developed by States.

Potential projects include:

- the addition of feeder lines and smart circuits
- vegetation management
- reconductoring
- strategically undergrounding power lines
- the use or construction of distributed energy resources for enhancing system adaptive capacity during disruptive events, including microgrids and battery-storage subcomponents
- other projects as identified

Objective 1: Decrease the length and time of power outages that were due to weather related events that result in an interruption of grid operability.

Metrics (Provisional):

- Number and duration of outages per year
- Number of affected customers
- Number of critical facilities impacted

Objective 2: Identify outdated/unreliable infrastructure and employ hardening technologies to reduce occurrence of outages.

Metrics (Provisional):

- Map (web-based) latitude, longitude, and geographic location of circuits, color-coded by entity owner
- Map nearby critical facilities including hospitals, other healthcare facilities, law enforcement facilities, gas stations, grocery stores, water and wastewater treatment facilities, emergency services, convenience stores, community centers, education facilities, and military installations
- Indicate the number of customers reliant on each circuit
- Map layer will show disadvantaged communities in West Virginia by ZIP code

Objective 3: Develop an all hazards approach to increase grid resilience.

Metrics (Provisional)

- Electric utility and TBD engineering firm will rank circuits
- Circuits most vulnerable to outages will receive priority
- Second-tier prioritization includes those most vulnerable to hazards including floods, extreme heat, extreme cold and winter storms, tornadoes, wind, wildfires, landslides, and earthquakes
- Projects in disadvantaged communities will make up 40 percent of awarded projects

Objective 4: Develop an all-encompassing workforce to implement advanced grid resilience technology.

Metrics (Provisional): Winning proposals will include, at minimum:

- Fixing the maximum amount of the most vulnerable infrastructure
- Number of outages to be addressed
- Duration of outages to be addressed
- Number of customers affected
- Cost and 100 percent match included in project budget
- A discussion of the ability to complete projects
- The number of workers trained to operate and maintain the resilience project once completed
- Plans to partner with a training provider (labor, community college, etc.), and the use of an appropriately credentialed workforce (i.e., requirements for appropriate and relevant professional training, certification, and licensure)
- Demonstration of future-proofing

- Demonstration of stakeholder inclusion, including a diverse set of populations, including underserved and disadvantaged communities who will be provided equitable opportunities and the benefits that derive from them

2. Criteria:

Eligible entities include:

- electric grid operators
- electricity storage operators
- electricity generators
- transmission owners or operators
- distribution providers
- fuel suppliers
- any other relevant entity, as determined by the Secretary of the US Department of Energy

The application process will give priority to projects that provide the greatest community benefit (number of customers improved, amount of infrastructure improved, etc.) in reducing the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events.

Application documents will include information from the Administrative and Legal Requirements Document for this federal funding opportunity relating to reporting, publication, records access, U.S. material production, prevailing wage, whistleblower protection, and certification and registration. Additionally, recipients must flow down the requirements to subrecipients to ensure the subrecipients' compliance with the requirements.

3. Methods:

The project team will design an application process and evaluate projects favorably that reduce the greatest number of outages to West Virginia's electricity customers.

WVOE will adequately publicize a competitive funding solicitation to eligible entities. Soliciting, awarding, and distributing funds will follow procedures relevant to the state of West Virginia. WVOE will track and publicize awardee achievements that improve resilience by reducing the likelihood and consequences of disruptive events, to generate quality jobs, and to improve equity and community benefits through its website or other appropriate websites.

Additionally, an eligible entity that receives a subaward under WVRPP must match 100 percent of the amount of the subaward unless the eligible entity sells not more than 4,000,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year, in which case the required match will be one-third of the amount of the subaward.

WVOE - using expertise of the Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA) and a TBD engineering firm - will review awardees' plans, confirm the ranking of most vulnerable circuits, and overlay this list with West Virginia's disadvantaged communities. At least 40 percent of the program funding will benefit DACs across the state.

4. Funding Distribution:

Funding will be allocated to as many projects as possible. WVOE's SEP BIL allocation may support partners' involvement in WVRPP.

5. Equity Approach:

The project map will include a layer showing West Virginia's disadvantaged communities by ZIP code. Forty-percent of awarded projects will benefit customers in DACs. Projects located within a census tract with a high population density, within an Appalachian Regional Commission at-risk/distressed area, and those located within a USDOE- and US Department of Transportation-defined disadvantaged community will be considered DACs.

Selection criteria for WVRPP will follow this approach and may include additional criteria as the White House and Federal Agencies continue to publish new guidance on mapping and definitions of disadvantaged communities.

6. Public Notice and Hearing:

WVOE held a meeting on April 11, 2024 to hear public comment on the updated GRID Program Narrative. Notice is attached below. There were no comments on the narrative.

Meeting Notice:

<https://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/meetingnotices/meeting.aspx?meeting=145199>