

# PGE Drive Change Fund

## Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for your interest in the PGE Drive Change Fund (DCF), which provides funding for local transportation electrification projects, with a focus on underserved communities. The DCF is made possible through the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Clean Fuels Program.

## Process Overview

### Where do the DCF funds come from?

The PGE Drive Change Fund is supported by the sale of Oregon Clean Fuels Program credits. PGE receives credits primarily from the number of residential electric vehicle registrations in PGE's service area. PGE sells these credits on the credit market and the funds from the sale of credits are used to support transportation electrification in residential and underserved communities. PGE participates in the program as a provider of low-carbon transportation fuel. Importers of higher-emissions fuels, such as diesel and gasoline, must purchase credits. The Clean Fuels Program is administered by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and aims to reduce the average carbon intensity in transportation fuels by 37% from 2015 to 2035. For more information, please visit the [Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's website](#).

### What type of projects can be funded?

The PGE Drive Change Fund supports many different types of projects - see our eligibility information in the Guidelines document and the list of previous awardees to find out more. All projects must advance transportation electrification in Oregon and provide community benefits to residential and underserved communities. Project categories include:

- Battery-powered electric vehicle acquisitions (includes e-bikes, e-tractors, e-forklifts, etc)
- EV charging infrastructure installation
- Education and outreach campaigns and programs

### Is there financial assistance available for applying for this grant?

Financial assistance is available for nonprofits with an annual operating budget of less than \$2 million. These applicants may request up to \$2,000 to reduce administrative burdens in applying for this grant. Financial assistance is separate from and has no bearing on funding decisions for the Drive Change Fund. Financial assistance is requested on the Drive Change Fund application.

### Does PGE prefer to have a larger application with multiple components or a smaller application with one component?

Either option is available to an applicant, and it is up to your discretion. If you decide to include multiple project components in one application, you must answer every application question for each project component. You should also include clear costs per project component to enable



PGE's Selection Committee to decide to fund all or only certain project components. Ideally, the committee takes an all-or-nothing approach to funding projects. If this is your organization's first transportation electrification project, we recommend starting with a smaller, proof-of-concept approach and then applying again in a future round to scale. We are committed to diversifying the awardees and aim to spread the benefits of the fund across different geographies and communities as much as possible.

### **Where can I go for help with my application?**

We recommend applicants meet with the PGE grant manager prior to submitting the application to help scope your project, understand the available technologies, and consider your cost. We can also direct you to other resources that offer similar services. Contact us at [PGEDriveChangeFund@pgn.com](mailto:PGEDriveChangeFund@pgn.com) if you'd like assistance.

### **Are last year's successful applications available to read?**

The full applications are not available, but you can find a list of awardees and their project descriptions on the [PGE Drive Change Fund](#) website.

### **What will help make my application stronger?**

In addition to meeting the basic eligibility and technical requirements, being well-designed and ready to launch, there are several elements that will be evaluated in the selection process. A full list is available on the DCF Guidelines document but a few examples include:

- Projects that address the needs of underserved communities
- Projects proposed or sponsored by a nonprofit or public entity
- Projects that include publicly available charging infrastructure
- Projects that include a clear plan for charging any electric vehicles acquired.
- Projects that will be in service within 12 months of the award agreement being signed (projects must be installed within 18 months)
- Projects that primarily impact the areas PGE serves

Lastly, we encourage you to tell your story - share the narrative component of what you want to do and why. This will help us better understand the potential impact of your project.

### **If my application is unsuccessful, will I receive feedback? Can I apply to the DCF again in the future?**

Yes, PGE will provide feedback for projects that are not awarded. PGE intends for the Drive Change Fund to be a recurring annual program; however, this is subject to stakeholder review per the OPUC docket governing the use of these funds. If the Drive Change Fund is opened again in future years, applicants may re-apply.

### **If I am a previous DCF awardee, may I apply again?**

Yes, if you have successfully completed the project and received approval on your final report, you are eligible to apply to a future round of the Drive Change Fund. An organization may receive a maximum of \$1 million over five years from the DCF.



## Can for-profit companies apply to the DCF?

Yes, for-profit companies can apply in partnership with a non-profit or a governmental entity. In addition, for-profit applicants have a self-funding requirement of 15% and cannot exceed a \$500,000.00 maximum request.

## Evaluation and Scoring

### What does it mean to provide a community benefit and why is this a requirement?

It is important that each application provides a community benefit to residential and underserved communities because this is how PGE ensures that the value of the Clean Fuels Program is returned to residential customers. We encourage applicants to demonstrate a community benefit beyond the cost savings air quality improvements and greenhouse gas benefits that transportation electrification provides.

That could be, for example, demonstrating that your project will:

- Educate and empower community members on electric transportation.
- Add critical infrastructure in underserved communities.
- Transport members of the community to essential services
- Deliver critical goods and services to community members
- Increase mobility options for underserved communities
- Add to the body of public knowledge about transportation electrification
- Enable your organization to expand social services

If your proposed project doesn't have a clear community benefit, it may be a better fit for some of our other programs, including Fleet Partner. If you have questions about this, please contact us at: [PGEDriveChangeFund@pgn.com](mailto:PGEDriveChangeFund@pgn.com).

### What does "underserved communities" mean?

For the purposes of the Drive Change Fund, PGE's definition of underserved communities comes from Oregon House Bill 2165 and includes: residents of rental or multi-family housing, communities of color, communities experiencing lower income, tribal communities, rural communities, frontier communities, coastal communities, and other communities adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards.

### How ready does my project need to be? Do I need to select my vendors before applying?

The PGE Drive Change Fund is looking for projects that are "shovel-ready" (whether actual shovels will be involved). Ideally, this means that your project is well-developed and ready to begin, with risks considered and mitigated. Your project team is defined and is qualified to do the work.

If vendors are involved, you have either selected your key vendors or have received multiple bids and are in the process of selecting your top choice (this is important for budget completeness, as well).



## **How extensive should my application responses be?**

We encourage applicants to consider the amount you are requesting, and tailor your application responses accordingly. If your project is at the lower end of the range, complete but concise responses are fine. If you are requesting the maximum amount for your project, we hope you'll provide more detail and documentation to support your request and each project component.

## **How will my application be evaluated?**

Applications are reviewed for eligibility and completeness by PGE then sent to a third-party evaluator. The third-party evaluator will conduct video interviews with applicants to learn more about their project and evaluate each project according to the evaluation criteria (more information below).

Once project evaluations are complete, the third-party evaluator will provide summaries and recommendations to the PGE Selection Committee. The selection committee will consider individual project evaluations and will also ensure that the final portfolio of awarded projects represents a diversity of geographies, applicants, project types, communities served, technologies used, etc. Final award determinations will be at PGE's sole discretion.

## **What are the evaluation criteria?**

Projects will be evaluated and scored by a third party based on the following criteria. Final award determinations will be at PGE's sole discretion.

- Project Design & Benefits
  - Applicant has strong demonstrated commitment to DEI.
  - Clearly identified needs and project designed to address those needs.
  - Project provides community benefit (educational, economic, environmental, social, etc.).
  - Engagement with and impact on historically underserved communities (defined by HB 2165).
  - Advances electric transportation in Oregon.
  - Project success, metrics, and evaluation clearly defined.
- Feasibility & Timeline
  - Project is "shovel ready" with a reasonable timeline, established milestones, and mitigated risks.
  - Project team and roles are clearly defined.
  - Assets identified for the project are appropriate for the project and goals.
- Cost & Financing
  - Project demonstrates financial need for DCF funding.
  - Project includes a reasonable budget, mitigated risks, and maximum value for funds requested.



- Demonstrated effort to secure additional funds.
- Organization demonstrates high financial stability and strength.

### **Can administrative costs be covered?**

Administrative costs, including staff time, project evaluation, branding, and marketing, is eligible up to 10% of total project costs. Any administrative costs exceeding 10% of total project costs are ineligible. If a project includes an education and outreach component, then project management costs directly tied to the implementation may be included (above the 10% administrative costs mentioned above).

### **What does education and outreach mean?**

Education and outreach campaigns can look quite different from each other, but at a high-level utilize staff time dedicated to advancing education to communities on transportation electrification. If you plan to include an education and outreach campaign as a part of your project, please include a breakdown of how many hours of staff time plan to be spent on the project. Here are a couple examples from the 2024 round:

- Metropolitan Family Services is hiring a bilingual program coordinator with the goal of helping low-income BIPOC communities attain favorable below-market loans for EVs and e-bikes, as well as education related to EVs in both English and Spanish.
- Oregon Environmental Council is providing education to lower-income households and communities of color about state and federal incentives for electrification.

## **Equipment**

### **For project proposals for electric vehicles, do chargers also need to be a part of the request?**

No, electric vehicles and charger projects can be standalone requests. However, if you are requesting funds for a vehicle and are not requesting funds for charging infrastructure, then please clearly outline plans for vehicle charging.

### **Do you have requirements for chargers?**

We do! Applicants requesting funding for charging infrastructure are required to use chargers from our qualified charger list: <https://portlandgeneral.com/qualified-chargers>

### **How do I know if my project requires new or upgraded electrical service, and how do I determine those costs?**

An electrical contractor can assess your property and determine whether the existing electric service is enough to cover your project needs, or if new or upgraded service is required. If new or upgraded service is required, the Drive Change Fund can help cover the cost you'd normally pay for this service. Designing the service and assessing these costs can take the PGE Service Design team time. You must submit your application for new or upgraded service prior to applying to the DCF. We'll work with our Service Design team throughout the evaluation process to ensure that by the end of the evaluation period, we know the full costs associated with your project and can assess it accordingly.

### **Can I apply for plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEV)?**



Starting in 2025, all vehicle proposals must be full battery electric vehicles (BEV). Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) will only be considered if there is no reasonable alternative on the market. Please talk to the PGE grant manager prior to including a PHEV in a project proposal.

### **Do you have recommendations for electric vehicles?**

PGE's [EV Cost and Savings Calculator](#) is a great place to start exploring the wide range of electric vehicles available, the rebates and incentives offered, and even your EV charging options as you add up how much you could save by going electric. For electric vans and buses, this is the best tool we've found:

<https://globaldrivetozero.org/tools/zero-emission-technology-inventory/>

### **Are electric bicycles considered electric vehicles for this program?**

Yes, they are. We're defining electric vehicles broadly with this fund and think electric micro-mobility is a great solution for many applications.

### **What about project components that make electric bike project more viable such as storage or weatherization?**

Generally, funding is only available for costs directly related to advancing transportation electrification. However, PGE wants to see these projects have a long-lasting impact in the community. If the storage and security solution is combined with the charging capability for the bikes, that would be an eligible cost, but a separate enclosure would need to be funded from the applicant. Weatherization items incorporated into programming that make e-bikes safer would be eligible. These expenses cannot exceed 5% of the total project costs.

## **Awardee Experience**

### **If my grant is successful, can I immediately start purchasing project elements such as vehicles and chargers?**

While we appreciate the eagerness to dive in, selected applicants cannot incur any costs on the project until the award agreement is countersigned and executed.

### **If my grant is successful, when will I receive funds?**

All applicants will receive 75% of awarded funding upon an executed award agreement. The remaining 25% of funding will be disbursed upon successful project completion and final report approval.

### **If my grant is successful, what is the reporting process?**

We will explain all the reporting requirements and processes during a webinar for grant awardees. The reporting requirements include a quarterly and final report.

