

PGE Drive Change Fund

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did PGE create the Drive Change Fund?

Transportation is the single biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon, and emissions are growing every year. Using clean energy to power electric cars, buses and trucks can reverse this trend. At PGE, we want affordable, clean electricity to become the fuel of choice for transportation, and the PGE Drive Change Fund is just one more way for us to help promote that transition.

The PGE Drive Change Fund is a flexible grant fund that can support diverse transportation electrification projects, from research to education and outreach to direct vehicle purchases of everything from transit buses and passenger vehicles to electric bikes and community service vehicles. Our intent is to fund an equitable mix of electrification projects that reflects the diverse ways people get around.

Where do the funds come from?


The PGE Drive Change Fund is supported by the sale of Oregon Clean Fuels Program credits, which PGE receives on behalf of residential customers who charge their electric vehicles at home. The Oregon Clean Fuels Program, administered by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, aims to reduce Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by 10% from 2015 to 2025. PGE participates in the program as a provider of low-carbon transportation fuel, and the funds from the sale of credits PGE receives will be used to promote and support transportation electrification.

What types of projects can be funded?

The PGE Drive Change Fund can support many different types of projects - see our eligibility information to find out more. All projects must advance transportation electrification in Oregon and provide a community benefit. Examples include:

- A government agency or nonprofit group buying electric vehicles to provide social services to vulnerable populations
- A subsidized electric car-share located at an apartment complex
- Publicly available charging infrastructure
- Outreach activities that educate people about benefits of and access to electric vehicles





Can multiple asks be included on the same application with the opportunity to scale back if chosen? Or would you pick parts of the application that you would fund? Is it preferable to do separate applications for each ask?

Either option is available to an applicant. If you decide to include multiple projects under one proposal, you should make clear what the costs are per project to enable the Selection Committee to decide to fund all or part of the scope. Ideally, the Committee takes an “all-or-nothing” approach to funding projects. We are also committed to diversifying the awardees of the fund and would look to spread the money across different geographies and different communities as much as possible.

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 because this is how PGE ensures that the value of the Clean Fuels Program credits is returned to residential customers. We encourage applicants to demonstrate a community benefit beyond just the cost savings, air and water quality improvements, and greenhouse gas benefits that all EVs provide. That could be, for example, demonstrating that your project will: transport members of the community, deliver critical goods and services to community members, add mobility options for the community, add to the body of public knowledge about transportation electrification, or enable your organization to expand your social services. Providing a community benefit does not mean that projects must be made publicly available or free – applicants can still charge for services or limit access to specific segments of the public. In contrast, projects that propose to electrify behind-the-scenes fleet vehicles are not good candidates for the Drive Change Fund.

If you have questions about this requirement, contact us at:
PGEDriveChangeFund@pge.com.

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, if you need it. Designing the service and assessing these costs can take PGE Service Design team some time, however. We recommend that you submit your application for new or upgraded electric service as soon as you know your project details—in fact, it’s required that you submit this application prior to submitting your Drive Change Fund application—and leave this line item as TBD in your project budget. 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.





Why are the technical requirements for charging infrastructure so complicated? Will it be hard to find a charger that fits the requirements? Will those models be more expensive?

The technical requirements for charging infrastructure help support PGE's vision for accessible, flexible charging infrastructure that is "future-proofed" and will be resilient to market changes down the line. The list looks complicated with all the acronyms and technical jargon, but many charging station models will fit these requirements. We encourage you to reach out to charging station vendors and provide them with the technical requirements list, and they can help you determine the right products to consider. And because the PGE Drive Change Fund can help cover many of the costs associated with this more sophisticated charging infrastructure, we don't anticipate that the additional expense will place a financial burden on applicants.

Where can I go for help with my application?

PGE staff can help you scope your project, understand the available technologies, and consider your costs. We can also help direct you to other resources who offer similar services. Contact us at PGEDriveChangeFund@pge.com if you'd like assistance.

How ready does my project need to be? Do I need to select my vendor(s) 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, 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).

For passenger EVs and vans, will COVID-19 affect your thinking about projects that involve multiple people from different households being in the same vehicle at the same time?

This is certainly something the Selection Committee is looking into for 2020. We value safety above all else at PGE and want to make sure any solution keeps customer healthy their number one priority. We will look towards the organizations to propose proper measures based on the communities they serve and will take those extra measures into consideration for the 2020 awardees.



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.

What will help make my application successful?

In addition to meeting the basic eligibility and technical requirements, being well designed and being ready to launch, there are several preferred elements that will be weighted in the application process. These are:

- Projects that address the needs of underserved communities
- Projects proposed or sponsored by a nonprofit or public agency
- Projects that leverage outside funding sources or applicant matching funds
- Projects that will be in service within 12 months of the date of the award (roughly, the end of 2021)
- Projects that primarily impact the areas PGE serves
- We also encourage you to look to the evaluation criteria to understand how your project will be evaluated. 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

Are last year's successful applications part of the public record and available to read?

Unfortunately, the full applications are not available to be disseminated. You can find a list of the awardees on the Drive Change Fund website to get in touch with those organizations directly.

What does "underserved communities" mean?

For the purposes of the Drive Change Fund, PGE's definition of underserved communities includes, but is not limited to: low-income individuals, communities of color, immigrants, non-English speakers, the long-term unemployed, communities that have been displaced from the urban core, communities with limited access to transportation options, women and girls, veterans, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Additional communities that have been underserved by access to electric vehicles include, but are not limited to, residents of multi-family housing and areas with a low density of public charging stations.



How will my application be evaluated? What is the decision-making process?

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness by PGE staff, and then sent to a third-party evaluator. The third-party evaluator will conduct phone interviews with applicants to find out more about their project and evaluate each project according to the evaluation criteria. The three evaluation categories are: Project Design and Benefits; Feasibility and Timeline; and Costs and Financing.

Once project evaluations are complete, the third-party evaluator will provide summaries and recommendations to a 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.

Depending on the range and number of applications submitted, PGE reserves the right to establish an internal, expedited evaluation process for smaller projects. The evaluation criteria will remain the same.

Will you be able to provide the specific scoring criteria and the weight placed on each?

Although we cannot provide the specific weight or points available in each criteria, we do list the high level categories our third party evaluator is considering in their scoring. For 2020, please refer to the Evaluation Criteria document. Answering the questions within will help improve a project proposal.

The requirement for an organization needing to have a budget of less than \$2,000,000 only applies to the additional \$2,000 for financial assistance - A larger organization can still apply for grant funding correct?

Yes! The Financial Assistance application is available for non-profits with an annual operating budget of less than \$2 million. However, that does not disqualify organizations of any size and structure of applying for the Drive Change Fund.

Do you have recommendations on vendors for full battery electric vans/buses?

The best tool we've found is the following website:

<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 very broadly with this fund and think e-mobility is a great solution for many applications. E-bikes were funded in 2019 and will continue to be eligible.

Since security is important for easily portable electric bikes and charging infrastructure, can grant funds be used for secure storage, like an enclosed secure bike storage space?

Generally, funding is only available for costs directly related to advancing transportation electrification. However, PGE does want 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.

If my grant application is successful, when will I receive the funds?

All applicants will be eligible to receive at least 75% of awarded funding upon signature of a funding agreement. The timing of disbursement of the remaining 25% of funding will vary from project to project based on the organization, the project, and the established need.

If my grant application is successful, what are the reporting requirements?

The reporting requirements vary by project type and can be found in the award recipient requirements document.

If my application is unsuccessful, will I receive feedback? Can I apply to the Drive Change Fund again in future years?

Yes, PGE will provide feedback for unsuccessful projects. 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, unsuccessful applicants may re-apply.





Can I apply for more than one grant?

Yes, multiple grant applications from the same organization are welcome. However, each grant application must represent a complete project in and of itself (i.e., we discourage trying to break one project into multiple projects to avoid exceeding the maximum grant size), and the Selection Committee will place a priority on a diversity of applicants receiving funding.

I have a question that's not covered here - who do I contact?

Just email PGEDriveChangeFund@pgn.com and we will be happy to answer your question!

