



**Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources**  
*Clean Energy Non-Wires Solutions for Municipal-Centric Utilities*  
*Program Guidance Document*

**The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) is pleased to announce the availability of \$500,000 in financial incentives to support the adoption of clean energy-based non-wires solutions for Municipal-Centric Utilities in Rhode Island – Pascoag Utility District and Block Island Utility District. These funds are being made available thanks to the state’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).**

Non-wires solutions use clean energy technologies to address electric grid needs. Clean energy technologies can include, but are not limited to, solar photovoltaics (PV), other types of renewable energy systems, energy efficiency and conservation, demand response, and energy storage.

Non-wires solutions can help the grid deliver electricity to homes and businesses when electricity demand is highest, sometimes at a lower cost than upgrading wires, transformers, and substations, the technique traditionally used to increase grid capacity. Non-wires solutions can also provide clean renewable energy, which may reduce net greenhouse gas emissions.

Specifically, through this initiative, OER will make available financial incentives to support associated equipment and construction costs of clean energy non-wires solution(s) owned and operated by the utility and/or associated services under ownership of a third-party solution provider. In all cases, approved incentives will be provided directly to the utility upon review and approval of OER, subject to program terms and conditions.

**Eligible entities may qualify for total grant awards of up to \$250,000 per project application, reserved on a first-come, first-served basis and contingent on availability of funding.**

**Program Objective**

The financial incentives offered by OER through this program are designed to decrease the total investment cost of grid solutions by promoting cost-effective, clean energy non-wires solutions in municipal utility districts while promoting use of innovative technologies that reduce electric sector greenhouse gas emissions.

**Contact Information**

For any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Carrie Gill at (401) 574-9121 or [Carrie.Gill@energy.ri.gov](mailto:Carrie.Gill@energy.ri.gov).

**Eligibility Criteria**

Grants are limited to entities and projects that meet the following minimum eligibility criteria. If the following criteria are all met, the application must also pass the evaluation process and criteria as described below and funding must be available. OER reserves the right to offer less funding than is requested and/or deny funding for any proposed project.

1. The entity is either Pascoag Utility District or Block Island Utility District.



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2. The grant amount requested is matched by the entity, with the entity covering at least 50% of the proposed non-wires solution project being proposed and funded by the entity.

The entity commits to starting construction on the proposed project within one (1) calendar year of the application submission date. Up to two (2), six-month (6 mo.) extensions of this deadline may be granted upon request of the applicant, with a detailed explanation as to why additional time is required, subject to review and approval by OER.

3. The proposed non-wires solution project is reasonably expected to reduce utility operating costs relative to a traditional wires solution(s).
4. The proposed non-wires project does not add fossil-based generation sources or otherwise increase the utility's greenhouse gas emissions profile.
5. The application must be completed in full and executed by an authorized utility representative.

**Application Instructions**

The application for this grant program consists of an application form emailed from the applicant to the program manager: [Carrie.Gill@energy.ri.gov](mailto:Carrie.Gill@energy.ri.gov).

1. **Applicant entity:** Please include the full name of the utility and street address of the main office.
2. **Contact information:** Please include the name, phone number, and email address for the appropriate contact person.
3. **Amount of grant funding requested:** Please specify a dollar value less than or equal to the per award maximum of \$250,000.
4. **Amount of matching funding:** Please specify the dollar value of matching funding being applied to the proposed non-wires project from the applicant (must be a dollar value greater than or equal to the amount provided in response to item #3, above).
5. **Additional matching funding:** Please specify any additional matching funding the utility anticipates from other funding sources (please specify the amount and identify the source for each additional source of funding).
6. **Total cost:** Please specify the total cost of the proposed non-wires project. If this amount does not equal the sum of amounts listed in item #3, item #4, and item #5, please include an explanation for the discrepancy.



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7. **Timeline:** Please include a timeline of major project milestones, including but not limited to: funding date(s) for additional funding source(s), estimated date(s) of procurement for equipment or services, date(s) for attaining relevant permits, the start date to begin construction, date of project completion, estimated date(s) of project inspection(s), and the expected start date of project operation.
8. **Problem statement:** Please describe the problem(s) that the proposed project is expected to solve.
9. **Non-wires project summary:** Please include a high-level summary of the proposed project, including whether the project adds fossil-based generation on the project site. Provide a detailed description of the project, including estimated project size, location(s), technology specification(s), estimated operating parameters (e.g., MWh of clean energy per year), ability of the facility/location to support clean energy, etc. Identify vendors, contractors, and subcontracting companies for the project, if known. Include anticipated benefits of the project, such as benefits to ratepayers, to the electric grid, and/or to the environment.
10. **Problem solution:** Please describe how the proposed project will solve the problem identified in item #8.
11. **Wires project summary:** Please describe the traditional wires solutions that would otherwise be deployed to solve the problem identified in item #8.
12. **Cost comparison:** Please compare the cost of the non-wires solution described in item #9 to the traditional wires solution described in item #11. Please consider upfront costs as well as ongoing expenses over the life of the projects.
13. **Miscellaneous notes:** Please include any additional notes or information about the proposed project, such as risks associated with cost, funding, technical specifications, procurement, and siting.
14. **Award conditions:** Please include a statement of express agreement to comply with all conditions of the grant award, as described in the Post-Approval process, below.
15. Include **additional documentation** (including, but not limited to, electrical diagrams and specification sheets for major components) as attachments to the email. Please indicate which items, if any, are confidential. Please refrain from sending certain sensitive information over email; instead please include a request for a phone call or meeting with the program manager to discuss whether the additional sensitive information is needed to satisfactorily complete the application.

The program manager will review your application for minimum eligibility criteria and will send a reply email within ten (10) business days either stating the application is complete and will be



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evaluated or that supplemental information is required. If supplemental information is required, the applicant will be able to resubmit the full, complete application at the leisure of the applicant.

Once the application is deemed complete, the application will move to the evaluation process, described below.

**Evaluation Process and Criteria**

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, with grant funding awarded to successful applications on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to availability of funding. Each complete application will be reviewed by the program manager and a technical consultant and scored for the following criteria.

1. The applicant adequately responds to the application items listed in Application Instructions.
2. The proposed project demonstrates a high likelihood of success of solving the problem identified in application item #8.
3. The grant request, matching funds, and total project cost are reasonable.
4. The application demonstrates reasonably anticipated benefits, such as benefits to ratepayers, to the electric grid, and/or to the environment.

Each criterion will be assessed on a scale of zero to 25 points, inclusive. Applicants must earn a minimum of 80 points to be awarded grant funding.

Applicants will be notified of OER's decision within four (4) weeks of the date of their complete application submission. In order to determine application suitability, the applicant may receive inquiries from OER including, but not limited to, requests for clarification and/or further documentation. Such requests will be sent to the applicant via email. Successful applicants will enter into contract negotiations, as described under Post-Approval, below.

**Post-Approval**

Successful applicants must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OER agreeing to all conditions of the grant, the disbursement schedule, and the total grant amount prior to receiving grant funds. The MOU may also include information about vendors, timeline of project milestones, and any additional reporting required prior to project completion. A sample MOU is provided with this Program Guidance Document.

Recipients of grant funding will be required to send an annual report to OER by March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year following project completion. The annual report shall contain, at minimum, the following information for the prior calendar year:

1. An updated project summary;
2. Total project cost;



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3. Amount of OER/RGGI funds utilized;
4. Projected project life;
5. Annual and lifetime MWh avoided;
6. Annual and lifetime MMBtu avoided;
7. Annual and lifetime energy savings, if applicable;
8. CO<sub>2</sub> avoided (tons CO<sub>2</sub>) on an annual and lifetime basis; and
9. Any additional information or data regarding the program as requested by OER.

OER reserves the right to request additional data on project status and impacts.

Grant recipients will be expected to notify OER of any known press releases, interviews, and/or new articles related to these projects. The grant recipient is expected to ensure that language is included in press that states the project was funded by the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources using Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative auction proceeds, whenever possible.

OER reserves the right to monitor the project during and after construction through the period stated in the MOU. Monitoring shall include, but is not limited to: financial audits, visits to the project site location(s) by OER personnel, third party inspection by an OER-hired contractor, and gathering data in digital and print forms.

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient to preemptively identify any possible sensitive data or information that OER should not disclose publicly, such as in a press release or video profile.

Grant funding will be disbursed to the grant recipient on completion of project milestones as described in the schedule below. In all cases, the grant recipient is responsible for requesting this disbursement and providing adequate documentation the milestone has been met. All disbursement requests and documentation should be emailed to [Carrie.Gill@energy.ri.gov](mailto:Carrie.Gill@energy.ri.gov).

**Disbursement #1: Twenty-five percent (25%)** of the approved grant amount will be eligible for disbursement following procurement of equipment or services. The recipient will be required to submit appropriate invoices.

**Disbursement #2: Fifty percent (50%)** of the approved grant amount will be eligible for disbursement following completion of project construction and successful inspection of the project by an OER-hired contractor.

**Disbursement #3: Twenty-five percent (25%)** of the approved grant amount will be eligible for disbursement following the project's operational start date. The grant recipient is responsible for notifying OER when this milestone has been met and providing supporting evidence, data or other relevant documentation showing successful operations. OER may also conduct a follow-up site visit at this time.