



Innovative Energy Engineering Studies for Local
Governments Request for Applications

November 10, 2025

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Section 1. Overview & Background

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality Energy Bureau (DEQ) invites eligible applicants to submit an application in response to this Request for Applications (RFA) for funding of energy feasibility and/or engineering studies to help inform the scope, design, and cost of innovative energy projects.

This RFA is funded by DEQ as part of the State of Montana's application for funding under the U.S. Department of Energy's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) State Energy Program (SEP) through Federal Grant No.DE-EE0010083.

DEQ intends to provide approximately \$356,000 to successful applicants from this RFA as reimbursement funding for eligible projects based on completion and acceptance of project milestones.

Please submit one application per study proposal. Eligible applicants may submit more than one project application. Depending on how many applications are received by DEQ, DEQ may limit the total number of awards per eligible applicant to ensure that funds are dispersed equitably across the state. Not more than \$150,000 of the total funds in this funding announcement will be awarded for Category A projects. DEQ will only review applications submitted by the requirements identified in Section 5 below.

Section 2. Eligibility Requirements

2.A. Applicant Eligibility. Eligible applicants include certain Government entities. "Government" shall mean a local government agency (including but not limited to a municipality, city, county, county special district, or irrigation district) located within the State of Montana.

All applicants must submit applications according to the schedule and instructions described in Section 5 below. All applicants must register with the state's online platform eMACS to post questions and view responses and submit final, complete applications.

2.B. Eligible Project Categories. Eligible project categories include:

- **Category A:** Hydroelectric assessment/feasibility study for irrigation canals, reservoirs, and other engineered structures designed to distribute water for agricultural purposes.
- **Category B:** Microgrid feasibility studies. A microgrid is a group of interconnected loads and distributed energy resources within clearly defined electrical boundaries that acts as a single controllable entity with respect to the grid. A microgrid can operate in either grid-connected or in island mode, including entirely off-grid applications.

2.C. Ineligible Costs. The following projects and/or costs are not eligible for funding through this RFA:

- ⊗ Expenses incurred before the contract associated with this RFA is fully executed.
- ⊗ Costs not integral to the proposed study (e.g., applicant administrative costs, purchase of equipment, regular ongoing costs, etc.).
- ⊗ Direct project funding (e.g., equipment, construction, personnel).

Section 3. Project Selection & Scoring Criteria

Each eligible application will be ranked according to the following evaluation ranking criteria. Each application will be evaluated on its own merit individually based on these criteria, including multiple submittals from the same entity.

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Metrics</u>	<u>Points Available (Out of 350 Maximum)</u>
A. Project description & goals	• Description of the study focus and how it might be used or is necessary to implement a future project. • Description should include what technologies might be studied and the potential energy usage and energy costs impacts if implemented. • How the study funded by this RFA fits into an overall strategy for the applicant.	50 points Minimal project description. 100 points Some project details. 150 points Detailed project description and plan on how to implement the study.
B. Consultant or principal conducting the study	• Years of experience working on comparable studies/projects • References • Demonstrate selection process of entity/team to carry out project.	25 points No or minimal description or documentation included on entity/team conducting study. 50 points Includes some detail on entity/team conducting study. 100 points Detailed description on process used to select entity/team to do study including relevant experience information.
C. Project timeline	• Provide a proposed schedule detailing the steps necessary for completing the study including expected dates for key project milestones such as start of study and project completion. • All project milestones must be completed within 12 months of the contract execution date.	15 points Project timeline provided but with minimal details on milestones. 30 points Application includes a project timeline with some detail. 50 points Application includes a detailed project timeline with details on milestones.

D. Project budget	Detailed cost estimates for study and any other costs associated with the project to be paid by the applicant or with the requested funding.	15 points Project budget provided but with minimal information. 30 points Proposal includes a detailed budget. 50 points Proposal anticipates as many projects costs as possible. Budget includes a significant cost-share from applicant or other source.
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Section 4. Proposal Materials & Instructions

Starting on the issue date of this RFA, until applications are selected and announced by DEQ, applicants are prohibited from communication regarding this RFA with any other Montana state agency staff, officials, or evaluation team members regarding this solicitation, except as permitted by the following DEQ contact person listed below. Any unauthorized contact may disqualify the applicant from further consideration.

For each proposal, interested parties must submit one complete application. All application materials must be uploaded by the deadlines identified in Section 5 below. If the electronic application materials are significantly large or exceed 15MB to upload into eMACS, please submit materials via the State of Montana's File Transfer Service (<https://transfer.mt.gov/Home/Login>). Follow the prompts to access an existing ePass account or create one. The FTS recipient will be Rebecca Gregg at rebecca.gregg@mt.gov. Please note: Please verify the size of your attachment(s) prior to attempting to submit. DEQ is not responsible for documents that are unable to be uploaded due to the size of attachments.

When uploading an application to eMACS for submittal, the file name of the application must include the applicant's name and if the application is being submitted for funding under Category A or B as defined in Section 2.B. An example of an appropriate application file name would be "ABC_Company_CategoryA." Applicants must also double-check that one of the category boxes is checked in the application form.

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1. Completed DEQ Energy Study application form with signature of individual from the lead applicant responsible for authorizing and overseeing completion of the project. Proposals that do not use the DEQ application form will not be considered for funding. Please make sure to check one of the two funding category boxes below and save your application file using the naming requirement in Section 4 of the RFA.

2. Documentation to demonstrate selection of consultant or team that will carry out the study. See scoring criteria C.

Section 5. Schedule of Events & Term

Applicants may submit questions regarding this RFA to the eMACS Q&A Board by 2:00pm Mountain Standard Time (MST) November 26, 2025. All answers to questions received through the Q&A Board will be posted to the same as soon as possible. The State reserves the right to answer or decline to answer questions e-mailed to the single point of contact after the deadline based on the subject and potential influence it may have for applications.

DEQ will only review applications submitted via eMACS by the deadlines identified in the RFA schedule table below and will notify applicants if a project will be awarded funding within approximately 21 days of the application due date.

The submission of an application under this RFA confers no right upon any applicant. To be eligible for funding, proposals must meet the minimum eligibility requirements described in Section 2. DEQ intends to evaluate and score applications based on the criteria listed under Section 3. If additional funding becomes available and there are qualified applications not able to be funded through this RFA, those qualified applications would be considered for the additional funding. DEQ reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the goals of this RFA. DEQ may periodically provide additional information via its website at <https://deq.mt.gov/energy/incentive>.

On the application deadline for Category A, the eMACS event to submit applications will be temporarily down for Category B applicants. The eMACS event will be re-posted as quickly as possible to ensure Category B applicants can upload the appropriate application documents before the Category B deadline.

The review team will evaluate submitted applications for eligibility, completeness, and whether they meet the goals of this RFA. See Section 2 “Eligibility Requirements” and Section 4 “Proposal Materials & Instructions” for further details. Should funding requests total more than the amount available in this RFA, proposals will be competitively ranked using the “Project Selection & Scoring Criteria” in Section 3.

Once project awards have been awarded and accepted, DEQ will enter into a contract with those applicants selected to receive funding under this program. Contracts will define applicant’s responsibilities to include deliverables, schedule for project completion, and timeline and method of payment. All projects will be completed, and documentation provided to DEQ, within 12 months of the contract execution date. Payments for eligible project expenses will be made on a reimbursement basis after certain project milestones are met and documented to DEQ. The term for funding of each successful applicant will end 12 months from the contract execution date. Extensions for project completion may be allowed if the applicant provides a reasonable justification to DEQ.

Solicitation Schedule – All times are Mountain Time

Event	Date
RFA Announcement	November 10, 2025
Opening to submit RFA questions to eMACS Q&A Board	November 10, 2025
Deadline to submit RFA Questions to eMACS Q&A Board	November 26, 2025
Category A deadline: Complete, signed applications and all attachments submitted via eMACS. Unsigned applications and any applications or attachments submitted outside of eMACS will be rejected.	December 12, 2025

Category B deadline: Complete, signed applications and all attachments submitted via eMACS. Unsigned applications and any applications or attachments submitted outside of eMACS will be rejected.	December 19, 2025
Award Notifications	Approximately 21 days after Application Deadline
Execution of Contract between DEQ & Successful Applicants	Approximately 21 days after Award Notification

Applicant's Signature

The application must be signed (electronically or in ink) by an individual authorized to legally bind that party. The applicant's signature on an application in response to this RFA guarantees that the offer has been established without collusion and without effort to preclude the State of Montana from obtaining the best possible supply or service. Proof of authority of the person signing the request for application response must be furnished upon request.

Reporting Requirements & Payment Requests

Periodic reporting will be required from the project start date until the project is completed in order for milestone payments to be released from DEQ. More information on reporting, including deadlines and report templates, will be provided to recipients after award notification. Payment of project expenses will take place on a reimbursement basis after certain project milestones are met and documented to DEQ.