



# Developing a successful Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging and Fueling Grant Program Application

[The Discretionary Grant Program for Charging and Fueling Infrastructure](#) is a competitive grant program to increase funding and public accessibility of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. Priority is given to projects that expand EV charging and alternative fueling infrastructure in rural areas and low and middle-income areas. Here is a [background explainer](#) on the grant opportunity, and below are five winning strategies for a strong and ambitious application.

**NOFO Application Deadline: June 13, 2023**

## #1 Assess your community's needs and readiness

As a starting point, cities should assess both their readiness for EV infrastructure and their community's demand and needs. For example, cities should [evaluate their grid capacity](#) to ensure that they are able to meet EV charging demand (rural areas are more likely to require upgrades to their grid infrastructure compared to urban centers). Municipalities must also consider pricing structures in order to ensure the project's financial viability. For example, [Green Mountain Power](#) – a Vermont utility – charges different rates for peak versus off-peak hours, which alleviates peak demand and reduces costs. Cities should also identify where existing charging and fueling infrastructure exists – and where there are gaps – to inform new site placement (the Department of Energy's [Alternative Fueling Station Locator](#) is an excellent resource). It is also important to assess existing zoning and permitting laws and determine if they need to be amended to better promote EV infrastructure. Cities should review DOT materials such as the [EV Infrastructure Project Planning Checklist](#), as well as the National League of Cities [primer](#) for municipal leaders, which provide additional activities to help determine community readiness.

## #2 Focus on disadvantaged areas

Promoting equity is an overarching priority of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and the Administration's [Justice40](#) initiative specifies that 40 percent of the benefits of federal climate investments flow towards marginalized communities. These goals are articulated in the EV charging grant opportunity, which specifically prioritizes investments in rural areas, low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, and communities with a low ratio of private parking spaces ([here](#) are resources for [rural communities seeking EV charging](#) funding opportunities). In order to prioritize equity, [cities should be specific](#) about community needs, historical inequities, and how EVs can potentially address these concerns. Ultimately, applications will be most competitive if they meaningfully embed equity in the entire design and use data to clearly document how they will meet community need, address inequalities, and achieve expected outcomes.

## #3 Engage state, regional and neighboring local governments

A competitive grant application demonstrates that the project aligns with broader state or regional strategies. This is particularly important for EV charging, under which the goal is to build a charging network that facilitates interstate and regional EV travel. It is also important to mention that the program includes separate funding streams: \$5 billion in formula grants that go directly to states to develop interconnected fueling and charging networks; and



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\$2.5 billion in competitive grants – which cities are eligible for – to establish [alternative fuel corridors](#) and develop EV infrastructure in underserved communities. The formula grants give states broad discretion, so it is a value-add if cities can work with their state environmental, energy, and transportation offices to ensure that their goals are in alignment.

## #4 Coordinate with external stakeholders

A successful project is dependent upon including community voice and generating buy-in and support from a broad cross-section of stakeholders. In particular, it is important for city leaders to engage frontline community stakeholders who will be affected by the new EV charging infrastructure. This will help to ensure inclusive development that improves equity and advance the Administration's [Justice40](#) goals. Cities should also coordinate with their local utility to ensure grid capacity, as well as forge public-private partnerships with EV companies to implement the project. The [Electric Highway Coalition](#), for example, is a network of electric companies focused on bringing EV infrastructure to US corridors. Cities should also leverage [local and regional](#) entities like the [Clean Cities Coalition](#), which is the Department of Energy's national network of 75 local coalitions focused on fostering public-private partnerships to advance EV infrastructure.

## #5 Develop a project plan

A successful proposal will synthesize all of the above provisions in a detailed plan – one that addresses a specific need, demonstrates stakeholder support, fits neatly into a statewide or regional strategy, and promotes equity. Cities should also look toward leveraging multiple sources of funding for a project, which further strengthens the grant application's competitiveness. The [Electrification Coalition](#) provides a database of federal and state incentives related to electric vehicles, charging stations, air quality, fuel efficiency, and other transportation-related topics. Ultimately, this grant opportunity should not be viewed in a vacuum, but as one tool that can help cities meet the goals set in broader climate plans.

Cities should also look towards successful examples of EV projects in other cities to identify best practices, gain inspiration, and develop a successful plan:

- Sacramento developed a [comprehensive EV strategy](#) in 2017 with the goal of achieving 75,000 zero-emission vehicles by 2025. The city made a point of engaging stakeholders early in the planning process – including the county, local utility, and a network of nonprofits – and also committed to an expedited review of permit applications for charging stations. Notably, Sacramento saw [59% growth](#) in publicly-available chargers between 2017 and 2020.
- [Pittsburgh](#) successfully implemented downtown EV charging, identifying a centralized location for a mixed-use EV supply equipment hub for fleet and public charging, and coordinating with the local utility to improve timeliness and scalability.
- The [Twin Cities](#) intermixed carshare and public charging stations, successfully securing federal funding for EV carshare and public charging to support the effort. Integral to their plan was identifying local partners and existing programs that could drive larger-scaled deployment.