



## Frequently Asked Questions

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## Questions and Answers

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### General

- 1) **Is the August 9, 2023, Equity and Access (E&A) Grant Program Application Webinar presentation on the Public Participation and Equity, Engagement, and Education grants available online?**

Yes. You can find a video recording of the webinar and a copy of the slides presented at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants>.

- 2) **Can my organization apply to more than one grant?**

Yes! Each of the three grants within the E&A Grant Program are considered separate for application and funding purposes, as they are each intended for different purposes.

- 3) **Do all the grant accounts have the same application windows?**

No. The application windows for the three grant accounts vary. Please refer to the application window questions for each respective grant account in this FAQ or the program website at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants>.

- 4) **How long does a project funded by the E&A Grant Program need to be?**

Grant funds need to be allocated no later than June 30, 2025, and expended by June 30, 2027. Although there is no required project length, grant projects need to be awarded by June 30, 2025, and completed by June 30, 2027.

- 5) **How does an organization who has never participated in CPUC matters become familiar with the CPUC and its work?**

Please visit the program website for a list of resources on becoming familiar with the CPUC: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants>. Additionally, the CPUC's Daily Calendar for day-to-day activities can be viewed [here](#) and the CPUC's Newsroom [here](#). The public may also read and/or subscribe to the CPUC's newsletter, Working for California, [here](#). The newsletter publishes a list of all new filings for that month. The public may also search the CPUC's docket, by clicking [here](#) and learning about the industries under the CPUC's jurisdiction [here](#). You may also wish to view our past [informational webinars](#) including a [webinar on understanding and interacting with the CPUC](#).

- 6) **Is there a tribal liaison for the CPUC who provide me more information on how my tribe can participate in CPUC matters?**

Yes, the [Office of the Tribal Advisor](#) is a resource to improve government-to-government relationships and communication between Tribes and the CPUC. CPUC Tribal Advisor Kenneth Holbrook serves the CPUC through his advisory role within the agency and as the CPUC's main point-of-contact with the Native American Tribes of California.

For specific information on the E&A Grant Program, Tribal organizations may contact [capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov).

- 7) **It was mentioned in the application webinar that there would be an online grants portal to upload our documents and submit our grant application online. When will this grant portal be available to use?**

There is no launch date for the online application portal yet.

## Eligibility

### 1) Who is eligible to apply for the E&A Grant Program?

To apply for any of the three grant accounts of the E&A Grant Program, an entity must be one of the following types of Eligible Applicants:

**Type 1:** California tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

**Type 2:** California Native American Tribes, including all Federally Recognized Tribes and non-federally recognized tribes California Native Americans as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21073. PRC Section 21073 defines a California Native American Tribe as a Native American Tribe located in California that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission for the purposes of Chapter 905 of the Statutes of 2004.

**Type 3:** Non-federally recognized California Tribes and Tribal entities, including organizations incorporated under Tribal law and wholly owned by the Tribe, Tribal Section 17 Corporations, and Tribal utilities and authorities operated under Tribal law.

### 2) My organization is not a registered 501(c)3 but uses a fiscal agent. Can the fiscal agent apply on our behalf?

No. Grantees may use sub-grantees to carry out work described in an application, but the grantee must be a 501(c)3 or Tribal organization. The grantee serves as the primary interface with CPUC staff and is also responsible for grant reporting. See the grant program Terms and Conditions for guidance, especially Grantee Accountability and Third-Party Rights provisions.

### 3) My Tribe is a federally recognized Tribe. Are we eligible to apply?

Yes. California Native American Tribes, including all Federally Recognized Tribes and non-federally recognized tribes are eligible to apply. Proof of tribal status will be required with your application package.

### 4) My organization is based within the jurisdiction of a publicly owned utility. Is it eligible for the E&A Grant Program?

Yes. The E&A Grant Program is paid for through the General Fund and there is no requirement that the applying organization be within an investor-owned utility territory. However, consideration to utility jurisdiction should still be considered when grant funded work will involve specific programs or initiatives that are restricted to investor-owned utility jurisdiction.

### 5) My local government has a 501(c)3. Are they eligible to apply?

The Equity and Access Grant Program was developed for community-based organizations that conduct outreach and provide services to the local community. It is not intended for local governments or associated organizations. Local governments may be part of a collaborative with other applicants but cannot be lead applicants. Please contact grant staff at [capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov) to discuss a particular situation.

### 6) If a 501(c)3 is active in California, but incorporated in another state, is it eligible to apply?

Yes.

## Public Participation Grant Account

**1) When does the application window open and close?**

The application window opens on Friday September 8, 2023 for the Public Participation Grant Account. The Public Participation Grant Account application will remain open until funding has been exhausted.

**2) Can I submit one application for multiple activities I participated in?**

Yes. You can include the hours for more than one eligible activity on a single application package. You will be awarded for the total reimbursement amount for all eligible hours and travel indicated in your application.

**3) Is travel time compensated?**

No, travel time is not compensated. However, there is a travel reimbursement available for up to \$450 for eligible travel expenses (transportation, accommodations, etc.) per eligible activity.

**4) Does being present at a public meeting or speaking during a public comment session count as an eligible activity?**

No. Participation within CPUC matters as a member of the public are not considered eligible activities for the Public Participation Grant. Only participation in an official capacity will be eligible.

**5) I was invited by the CPUC to participate in an activity that is not listed in the application. Can I still receive compensation for my participation?**

Yes. Please select the “other” option on the application checklist and describe the activity you participated in.

**6) How do I know that the meeting I attended is eligible for compensation?**

If you were invited by a CPUC staff member to participate in an activity in an official capacity on behalf of your organization, community, or Tribe, then you will be eligible for compensation.

**7) Can multiple individuals participate in eligible activities on behalf of an organization and be compensated for each participant’s time?**

Yes, as long as each individual has been invited to participate in the eligible activity in an official capacity.

**8) Is there a limit to the amount of travel expenses I can claim?**

Yes. The maximum travel reimbursement amount is \$450 per eligible activity.

**9) The Working Group I participate in provides compensation for my participation. Am I able to apply for additional compensation through the Public Participation Grant?**

Simultaneous compensation for the same activities such as meeting participation is not allowed. There may be situations where a Working Group may not compensate members for other types of activities, such as participating in sub-committees. Those activities may be eligible for compensation under this grant program.

**10) The Working Group I participate in provides compensation for up to a certain number of members. I don’t receive compensation for my participation. Can I apply for a Public Participation grant?**

Yes. However, you should contact the CPUC before applying to verify your specific situation.

**11) The Advisory Board that I serve on gets a small stipend that is less than what is offered by the Public Participation grant. Can I forgo that compensation and apply for this grant?**

No, if there's an opportunity to receive funding from another source for the same activity, an applicant would not be eligible.

**12) My organization has received Intervenor Compensation previously, do we still qualify for a Public Participation grant?**

Yes.

**13) My organization's Intervenor Compensation claim was denied, are we still eligible to apply?**

An organization is not eligible to apply if their Intervenor Compensation claim was denied due lack of significant financial hardship. Otherwise, an organization would be eligible to apply.

**14) "Activity Invitation" is noted in three different instances along with another form of Proof of Participation. Does that mean that a meeting invitation that includes my name as a speaker is not sufficient?**

A meeting invitation does not show proof of attending an event. In addition to an invitation, you must also provide an attendance log, a photo of you participating at an event, or a virtual screenshot of you or your avatar attending the event.

**15) Where can I get the travel expense claim form that I need to submit for my travel?**

If travel was involved in the course of your participation in a CPUC activity, you must submit [Travel Expense Claim Form STD262A](#) to request reimbursement. This form must be included in your grant application.

**16) I submitted my application over email, when will I hear back?**

Applicants will likely hear back from CPUC staff within 14 days with an application status update.

**17) After my application is approved, is there anything else I need to do?**

Yes, a completed [Payee Data Record, STD. 204](#) is required for payment processing for the first grant disbursement. For subsequent disbursements, payment will be automatically processed. Any change of CBO/Tribal organizational information will require a new Payee Data Record, STD 204.

**18) Can an eligible activity be reimbursed through the Public Participation Grant retroactively?**

Only if the activity took place during the grant period, which begins on September 8, 2023, and as long as funds still remain in the grant account. Activities that took place prior to that date are not eligible.

**19) Do I apply for the Public Participation Grant before or after completing an eligible activity?**

After. Participants of an eligible activity can apply to be reimbursed for their time and up to \$450 for travel expenses.

**20) If I participate in multiple eligible activities, do I apply to the Public Participation Grant more than once?**

It is possible to engage in multiple activities and apply just once or multiple times. An applicant may identify more than one eligible activity on an application or submit separate applications for each eligible activity. Please note that the grant account is "first come, first served" and waiting to submit an eligible activity may result in non-reimbursement due to the exhaustion of grant account funds.

**21) Are individuals representing an organization or the organization itself awarded grant funds?**



All award payments are made to the organization and only the organization's payee information will be collected by the CPUC.

**22) If a member of our organization receives compensation for participation in an eligible activity personally, but the organization does not receive any compensation, are we ineligible to apply?**

If the individual is being compensated as a formal representative of your organization, then your organization will not be eligible to be compensated through the Public Participation grant for the same activity.

**23) How does an organization become aware of and get assigned to an eligible activity? Where can I find a list of current eligible activities?**

CPUC staff is currently working on methods to list opportunities for participation. The CPUC's Daily Calendar lists day-to-day activities [here](#) and the CPUC's Newsroom is also a good source of information [here](#). The public may also read and/or subscribe to the CPUC's newsletter, Working for California, [here](#). The public may also search the CPUC's docket, by clicking [here](#) and learning about the industries under the CPUC's jurisdiction [here](#).

Opportunities may be posted on the program website at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants>, but it is recommended that potential applicants do their own research.

**24) Can an eligible applicant recruit a community member to represent their community in a CPUC eligible activity and use the Public Participation award to compensate the community member?**

Yes. However, all award payments are made to the organization and only the organization's payee information will be collected by the CPUC.

**25) How long after participation in an eligible activity does an applicant have to apply to the Public Participation Grant?**

Grant funds need to be allocated no later than June 30, 2025, and expended by June 30, 2027. As such, Public Participation grant applications will no longer be considered after June 15, 2025. However, it is expected that the grant account will run out of funds prior to that date. As the grant account is "first come, first served", waiting to submit an application may result in non-reimbursement due to the exhaustion of grant account funds.

**26) Is it possible that an applicant who completes an eligible activity is not compensated due to Public Participation funds being exhausted?**

As the grant account is "first come, first served", an application may result in non-reimbursement due to the exhaustion of grant account funding. Funding awarded and remaining funds will be periodically updated online at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants>.

**27) Can I sign up to receive emails on eligible activities?**

An Equity and Access Grant Program email subscription form is currently in development and will be found on the [www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants) web page. Check the web page for updates.

**28) Are there any activities through other state agencies, such as the California Energy Commission, that would be eligible for reimbursement through the Public Participation Grant?**

Organizations will be compensated for participation in day-to-day CPUC activities only. There may be some scenarios where CPUC-related activities overlap with the work of other agencies. We will take those situations on a case-by-case basis. Please contact [capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:capacitygrants@cpuc.ca.gov) to inquire about your specific situation.

**29) Is it possible for my Public Participation Grant to be denied if I already participated in an eligible activity?**

An application may be denied for non-completeness, such as no eligible proof of participation or incomplete application coversheet. Staff will attempt to rectify incomplete applications with applicants. Applications may also be ineligible for review if grant funding becomes exhausted.

**Equity, Engagement, And Education Grant Account**

**1) When does the application window open and close?**

The application window for the for Equity, Engagement, and Education (EEE) Grant Account opens on September 8, 2023, and closes on October 31, 2023. Cycle 2 will be at a future date in 2024.

**2) When will the CPUC announce the awards for the EEE Grant Account?**

Awards will be announced 30 to 90 days after the closure of an application window.

**3) Is it acceptable to collaborate with another party to apply for the grant?**

Yes, if the lead applicant is a 501(c)(3) or Tribe. Collaboration within the project can be with non-501(c)(3) and non-Tribal partners or sub-contractors.

**4) My organization plans to apply for an EEE grant to educate the community on a specific proceeding and mobilize them to advocate for their interests. If we later realize we need to hire legal help, can we modify our grant to include legal help?**

Modifications to a workplan will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please work with CPUC staff to get approval before making any changes. Please note that grant amounts will not be increased from the original amount stated in the Grant Agreement.

**5) My organization is well versed in CPUC decision-making processes but is statewide and does not focus on a specific geographic disadvantaged community. Can we form a coalition with a local organization and assist them in applying for the EEE grant?**

Yes. However, the lead applicant must be an eligible entity to apply. The lead applicant can then use EEE funds to employ subgrantees or contractors.

**6) The EEE grant allows funding for Education and Training, Network and Collaboration, and Resource Development. Are we restricted to choosing one of these focus areas for our grant application?**

No. You may develop a project that encompasses one, multiple, or all focus areas.

**7) Is it a requirement to use one of the community data resources mentioned in the “Project Need” question in the EEE application guidelines (CalEnviro Screen, Census data, etc.)?**

No, but the source must be credible and not anecdotal. Academic papers/studies and community reports published by local economic development corporations and community foundations could be used as sources of data.

**8) Do I need to identify performance measures and expected outcomes for each goal in my EEE application workplan?**

Yes.

**9) When proposed new staff is identified in our budget table, do I need to account for benefits and other overhead employee expenses in addition to salary?**

Applicants should budget for any new expenses incurred for hiring a new employee.

**10) If my application is not accepted, is there an appeal process to reconsider my application?**

No, all decisions are final. However, applicants may apply again during cycle 2.

**11) Can EEE funds be used to procure a subject matter expert to train staff in ways to participate with the CPUC?**

Yes.

**12) Does a 501(c)3 need to provide audited financials with their EEE grant application?**

No.

**13) What are some examples of topic areas related to the CPUC that eligible organizations could perform outreach on?**

It's important to assess the issues that matter to your community and examine which ones intersect with issues/industries under the CPUC's jurisdiction. Here are some examples of key topics: utility [General Rate Cases](#), [Wildfire Mitigation](#), [Transportation Electrification](#), [Building Decarbonization](#), [High Distributed Energy Resources](#), [Demand Flexibility and income-graduated fixed charges](#), [Summer Reliability](#), [Energy Efficiency](#), [California Lifeline](#), [Affordability](#), [Ridesharing](#) and [New Online-Enabled Transportation Services](#), [Railroad Safety](#), and [Long-Term Gas System Planning](#). Applicants may also look at issues holistically, such as addressing impact of climate change in disadvantage communities or work to improve the California Lifeline program and expand broadband in underserved communities by coordinating work on multiple proceedings/issues that are related to these broader issues.

This is not a comprehensive list. Please refer to the CPUC [website](#) and resources listed in this FAQ document for more information.

**14) Can EEE funds be used to educate and organize community-based organizations to educate and organize their communities to participate in the CPUC matters?**

Yes.

**15) Can EEE funds be used for research that would later inform Intervenor Compensation-funded activities?**

Yes. However, the same work cannot be funded by both the grant and Intervenor Compensation. Once grant funded work has been fulfilled, an applicant may use the final work product that was completed under the EEE grant to inform future work that is eligible to be compensated under Intervenor Compensation.

## **Clean Energy Access Grant Account**

**1) What is the date for the Clean Energy Access Application Webinar?**

The webinar will take place in the fourth quarter of 2023. The specific date will be published online when available at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants>.

**2) When does the application window open and close?**

The application window for cycle 1 will open in late 2023 or early 2024. The specific dates will be published online when available at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/capacitygrants>. Cycle 2 will be at a future date in 2024.