

Questions and Answers
DC Fast Chargers for California's Interregional Corridors
GFO-15-603

These answers are based on the Energy Commission's interpretation of the questions received. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine whether or not their particular proposed project is eligible for funding, by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation. The Energy Commission cannot give advice as to whether or not your particular project is eligible for funding, because all proposal details are not known.

Administrative

Q.1: Are the funds awarded in GFO-15-603 subject to Federal or State tax?

A.1: The applicant should consult their accountant or legal adviser to determine if any grant will be subject to Federal or State taxes.

Application

Q.2: Would the Energy Commission consider accepting electronically-submitted applications, with digital signatures?

A.2: The Energy Commission is currently exploring the possibility of allowing electronic application submittals. However, this solicitation requires applicants to submit hard copies of applications in accordance with the solicitation's requirements. (See Application Manual Section III.B.)

Equipment

Q.3: Is there a preference for purchased as opposed to leased equipment?

A.3: No, the solicitation does not specify a preference.

Q.4: Is it possible for the grant recipient to donate the assets of the charging station over to a private business partner, such as a private charging station network? If so, what are the specific requirements?

A.4: Attachment 9, "ARFVTP Terms and Conditions," specifies that title to equipment purchased by the Recipient with grant funds shall vest in the Recipient. At the end of the agreement, the Energy Commission and recipient must agree on the disposition of the equipment purchased in whole or in part with Energy Commission funds. In general, the Energy Commission allows for disposition of the equipment purchased with grant funds as long as it is used for the same purposes as those of the grant award.

Q.5: Section II (B) (7) states: “The charging station sites are strongly encouraged [to] have 480V 3-phase power available and adequate transformer capacity to serve the DC Fast Charger(s).” Could the Commission provide some guidance on the steps they expect Applicants to take in budgeting and facilitating transformer upgrades? Does this mean that upgrade costs cannot be included in the costs paid by the Energy Commission under this solicitation?

A.5: Transformer upgrades are eligible expenditures under this solicitation, but are not required for an application to be successful. Applicants must budget funds for their proposed project to ensure the entire proposed scope of work is completed within the proposed schedule and is cost-effective.

Q.6: Given that it may be extremely expensive or impossible to provide 480V 3-phase in some of the rural areas covered by this GFO, how much weight does this "strong encouragement" carry when scoring applications?

A.6: All things being equal, if two potential sites exist and one has 480V and the other does not, the 480V *may* receive a higher score. The solicitation has no minimum power requirement. There should be adequate power to serve the proposed DC fast chargers. Applicants may propose projects that utilize 240V AC single phase, 208V AC 3-phase, or solar power if appropriate. The proposed technical specifications will be evaluated and scored against the published evaluation criteria.

Q.7: Is it correct to assume that the "adequate transformer capacity" statement refers only to the DC Fast Chargers that are installed, not the potential future chargers installed at the stub out points?

A.7: Yes.

Q.8 The charger we plan to install is a DC fast charger with the dual ports (one CHAdeMO), will this qualify?

A.8: It is the applicant's responsibility to determine whether or not their particular proposed project is eligible for funding, by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation. The Energy Commission cannot give advice as to whether or not your particular project is eligible for funding, because all proposal details are not known. In general, Section II.B of the application manual states that the charging equipment must be networked and include at least one of the following options:

- At least one CHAdeMO fast charger, at least one SAE CCS fast charger, and at least one J1772-compliant Level 2 charger.
- *At least one dual unit with both CHAdeMO and SAE CCS connectors and at least one J1772-compliant Level 2 charger either as a separate unit or incorporated into the fast charger. [Italic emphasis added.]*

Q.9: What is the minimum speed of charge requirement for the DCFC? 50 kW, 25 kW 20 kW, etc.

A.9: There is no minimum power requirement for DC fast chargers funded under this solicitation. The proposed technical specifications will be evaluated and scored against the published evaluation criteria.

Q.10: Is there a requirement for the charger to be networked?

A.10: Yes, please see Section II.B.7, Charger Equipment Requirements.

Q.11: Section 7, Charging Requirements on Page 12 of the Application Manual lists that a Level 2 charger can be incorporated to the fast charger. Incorporating Level 2 charging systems into the fast charger runs the risk of blocking DCFC-dedicated parking spaces. Would the Energy Commission give greater weight to Applicants proposing separate Level 2 chargers with their own dedicated parking spaces?

A.11: The solicitation provides flexibility in the technical requirements to allow applicants to propose projects that maximize the benefits of the funding based on the unique site location requirements. Some sites may restrict the number of parking spaces it is willing to provide for the DC fast chargers. With everything else being equal, projects with the capability to charge vehicles at both a DC fast charger and Level 2 simultaneously *may* receive a higher score than a project that can only charge one vehicle at a time at the site. The proposed technical specifications will be evaluated and scored against the published evaluation criteria.

Q.12: Can a DC fast charger that is currently pending UL certification be included in the proposal, with the expectation that the UL certification will be completed by installation date?

A.12: It is the applicant's responsibility to determine whether or not their particular proposed project is eligible for funding, by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements within the solicitation. The Energy Commission cannot give advice as to whether or not your particular project is eligible for funding, because all proposal details are not known. In general, Section II.B.7, Charging Equipment Requirements, states "the electric vehicle charging equipment shall be certified by the Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), or equivalent safety standard." The applicant will have to demonstrate in their application how the equipment meets at least one of these requirements at the time of the application.

Locations

Q.13: On the I-15 and the I-10, may stations be located, or extend, beyond the border of California?

A.13: No. All proposed project locations must be located in California.

Q.14: Can the Energy Commission provide an exhaustive list of existing and planned DCFC sites, since the Energy Commission claims adequate proximity to these sites benefit one’s application?

A.14: The table below identifies the planned charging station sites funded by the Energy Commission that are located on or near the identified corridors and meet the criteria for this solicitation. Awards made by air districts or other public agencies during the development of your application should be taken into account as soon as the information is made public. Any sites being developed that are not publicly noticed in time to be evaluated for the purposes of this solicitation will not be held against the applicant’s proposal. The solicitation refers applicants to Plugshare (<http://www.plugshare.com>) and the Department of Energy’s Alternative Fuels Data Center (http://www.afdc.energy.gov/fuels/electricity_locations.html), which update existing and planned DC fast charger site information.

Planned Stations	Corridor	Quantity and Type of Available Connectors
24303 Town Center Drive, Valencia, CA 91355	SR-14: East of Santa Clarita to Inyokern	1 CHAdeMO 1 SAE CCS
3100 Camino Del Rio Court, Bakersfield, CA 93308	SR-58: East of Bakersfield to Lenwood	2 CHAdeMO 2 SAE CCS
375 Leavesley Road, Gilroy, CA 95020	SR-152: SR 99 to east of Gilroy	2 CHAdeMO 2 SAE CCS
12754 California 33, Gustine, CA 95322	SR-152: SR 99 to east of Gilroy	1 CHAdeMO 1 SAE CCS
2415 W. Kettleman Lane, Lodi, CA 95242	SR-12: Fairfield to Lodi	2 CHAdeMO 2 SAE CCS
30035 County Road 8, Dunnigan, CA 95937	I-505: Vacaville to Dunnigan	2 CHAdeMO 2 SAE CCS

Q.15: Does Brisbane, located off of Highway 101 fall within an applicable corridor?

A.15: No. For Highway 101, eligible sites must be located from the Oregon border travelling south in California to north of Santa Rosa. Based on the information provided, Brisbane, located more than 70 miles south of Santa Rosa, appears ineligible as a site under this solicitation.

Permitting/California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Q.16: With the upcoming streamlining of the permitting process for DC Fast Charging infrastructure throughout California, could Applicants expect a reduction in the amount of documentation required under the Attachment 7 CEQA Worksheet?

A.16: No.

Bonus Points

Q.17: Would the Commission consider giving bonus points to Applications proposing to complete construction and begin operation of the charging stations significantly ahead of the March 31, 2021 deadline?

A.17: No. However, the “Project Implementation” scoring criterion provides scoring preferences for projects that “will be completed expeditiously...” Applicants are encouraged to expedite construction and project completion to the greatest extent possible.

Q.18: The solicitation states that applicants do not need to propose the number of preferred sites listed in Table 2, however bonus points are awarded for those that can. Has the Energy Commission considered that this may encourage more sites than are actually needed in an identified corridor, or penalize an applicant who does not meet the number of preferred sites, especially if an applicant can show the proposed number offered meets the criteria listed in the solicitation.

A.18: The bonus points are to incentivize applicants to propose sites sufficient to allow a light duty electric vehicle with a 75-mile all-electric range to successfully drive the entire length of the selected corridor without danger of being stranded. The preferred additional number of sites is based on Energy Commission staff’s analysis of the preferred number of charging sites for each corridor. If an applicant can adequately demonstrate that fewer sites are necessary, and the application is otherwise eligible, this application remains eligible under the solicitation and will compete for funding. In general terms, more chargers and more charging sites are preferred and encouraged and applications proposing greater numbers of chargers and sites will be rewarded through the bonus points and the scoring criteria.

Match Share

Q.19: Are there any grant funding sources which cannot be applied as match funding to the present solicitation?

A.19: Other sources of Energy Commission funding may not be used as match funds under this solicitation.

Miscellaneous

Q.20: In terms of evaluation, which of two applications would score higher (all else being equal)?

- a) An application that proposes to install more than the “preferred additional number of sites” with a higher grant request, or**
- b) An application that proposes to install the “preferred additional number of sites” with a lower grant request.**

A.20: The applicant should consider the scoring evaluation criteria, the possible number of points for each criterion, and the bonus points within the solicitation to determine the best approach. With everything else being equal, a project proposing to install a greater number of DCFCs along a selected corridor *may* score higher in accordance with the scoring criteria. Specifically, projects exceeding the preferred number of sites identified may achieve higher scores in cost-effectiveness, expected project benefits, and facilitation of driver charging sessions. Please note that the solicitation requires applicants to describe how the proposed project’s budget is cost-effective and applications will be evaluated, in part, on the cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget.

Q.21: We have submitted a grant application for the EV GO grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). We have not heard if we received these funds or not, but are anticipating that we will have uncovered project costs. Can we apply for this grant in addition to potentially receiving funds from BAAQMD?

A.21: Yes, if you are otherwise eligible, you may apply for this grant in addition to potentially receiving funds from the BAAQMD. Grant funding from the BAAQMD may be used as match share under this solicitation. Applications must meet the minimum requirements of the solicitation.

In addition, only funds spent after the release of a Notice of Proposed Award (NOPA) recommending the project for funding may be counted as match share towards the Energy Commission project. Match share expended prior to grant agreement execution is done at the proposed Awardee’s own risk; the Energy Commission is not liable for Awardees’ match share costs if the grant agreement is not approved, if grant agreement approval is delayed, or if the match share expenditure is not allowable under the terms and conditions of the grant agreement or this solicitation.

Q.22: Can an individual Publically Owned Utility (POU) or municipality apply for a portion of the maximum award for a corridor, as noted in table 1 of the application manual, to install one or more sites in their respective service territory or jurisdiction?

A.22: No, a POU may not apply for just a portion of the corridor to install sites only in their respective service territory or jurisdiction. A POU may apply to complete a corridor by installing stations in their respective services territories or jurisdictions and partnering with a County or other entities to install charging stations outside of their service territory. Under this solicitation, an applicant must propose to complete the entire corridor selected. The applicant may break up or combine their projects as long as they adhere to the minimum requirements identified in the solicitation; however one entity must be the prime applicant, be able to sign the agreement, and take responsibility for ensuring the project is completed.

Q.23: Is there a total number of drivers that need to be able to access the DCFC station within a 24 hour period? Is there also a certain number of drivers in a given time period that should be specified?

A.23: There is no usage requirement in this solicitation. However, everything else being equal, projects that have a greater ability to serve consumers will score higher in accordance with the scoring criteria.

Q.24: Will there be funding further down the road for electric vehicle charging infrastructure that includes the San Diego area, particularly areas east of San Diego with routes heading towards Las Vegas?

A.24: The Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program (ARFVTP) anticipates but does not guarantee future electric vehicle charging funding opportunities. The specific focus and eligibility requirements of these potential solicitations have not yet been determined.

Q.25: For the corridors going through the desert in Southern California, there has been one grant issued by the Mojave Air Quality Management District (AQMD) for chargers along the Interstate 15 route. Can an application be awarded bonus points for coordinating the two grants together so that there's no duplication of efforts or competition of public funds?

A.25: No, there are no additional bonus points awarded for coordinating other grants with this solicitation. The scoring criteria do not provide points for coordinating grant awards. However, grant funding from the Mojave AQMD may be used as match share under this solicitation and may provide scoring advantages under certain criteria such as "Project Budget/Finance" or "Project Readiness".

Q.26: Is there any available funding for chargers for heavy duty vehicles?

A.26: This solicitation is for DCFC along highway corridors to service extended travel by light-duty vehicles. However, it does not exclude use of chargers built with funds from this solicitation by heavy-duty vehicles.

Q.27: The Air Resources Board is offering programs for financing, purchasing, and/or leasing of vehicles. To encourage the use of those vehicles, we want to make sure that there's infrastructure in place for those vehicles. Should we coordinate other funding opportunities that exist with this solicitation, particularly with vehicles?

A.27: The CEC encourages coordination with other funding sources, which can help the CEC leverage other available funds and insure there is no duplication of efforts. However, there is no requirement in the solicitation for coordination for funding opportunities.

Q.28: Please define "stranded" and "complete the corridor."

A.28: Under this solicitation, "complete the corridor" is defined as having proposed electric vehicle charging infrastructure coverage that is sufficient to allow a light duty electric vehicle with a 75 mile all-electric range to successfully travel the entire length of the selected corridor without danger of being stranded. "Stranded" is defined as having insufficient range provided by a charge to reach another charging station.

Q.29: Number 9 under Section III.F.2.a states "Describe how the proposed DC fast charging station location(s) support the local region's plans for electric vehicle charging and how local planning logistics were applied in selecting the charging site location(s)." Are you suggesting contacting the local regions to get input from the local agency?

A.29: Yes.