

Community Energy Management Services RFP Q&A

1. We are looking for clarity concerning what constitutes an eligible "Michigan local government." Can a Joint Recreational Authority be considered a Michigan local government and receive services under this program? Or do we have to work specifically with a city/town/village?

Ans. The focus of these grants is intended to be on the broader energy use and planning efforts at cities/twps/villages/counties. The Joint Recreational Authority may receive services under the grant program, but it should be in the context of and in coordination with a broader CEM program in the surrounding cities/twps.

2. Has the MEO released the best practices document/ toolkit referenced in the RFP?

Ans. The MEO CEM best practices documents / toolkit documents are considered working drafts, so we are still inviting feedback on them, and expect to receive additional feedback from communities throughout Phase 2 of the program (this grant). For the purposes of responding to this RFP and as a framework for talking with communities, please refer to the following documents:

CEM Sample Position Description

www.michigan.gov/documents/energy/MEO_CEM_Position_Description_505894_7.docx

CEM Strategy

www.michigan.gov/documents/energy/MEO_CEM_BP_Strategy_507780_7.pdf

CEM Best Practices

www.michigan.gov/documents/energy/MEO_CEM_Best_Practices_Checklist_507782_7.pdf

3. In their responses how clear should organizations that intend to collaborate but write separate responses to the RFP be about their intended collaboration? Is it advisable for collaborators in this situation to have shared language in narrative portions of their proposals?

Ans. Organizations that intend to collaborate but write separate responses should mention it in their proposal so we can see how the pieces are intended to fit together. Shared language may be useful but should be determined by the applicant(s).

4. Will a list of qualified consultants be issued? Do you have suggestions or other potential partners that you can share with us who might consider a regional team effort?

Ans. The following organizations are likely to be interested based on participation in Phase 1 projects, the CEM informational call, and/or questions received in response to this RFP. Others may be qualified and this should not be considered a comprehensive list.

Phase 1 Grant Participants:

-Ecoworks (see contact below) in collaboration with Michigan Energy Options (John Kinch, jkinch@michiganenergyoptions.org), SEMREO (Jennifer Young jennifer@regionalenergyoffice.org), SEEDs, and Dave Konkle – participating communities included Houghton, Ishpeming, Dearborn, Manistee County, Marquette, and Grand Traverse County

-Clean Energy Coalition – advisory team/participating communities included Meridian Twp, Farmington Hills, Monroe County, Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Flint, Michigan Green Communities network

Conference Call Participants:

Ecoworks - Allison Harris arharris@ecoworksdetroit.org

Clean Energy Coalition - Bonnie Bona bonnie@cec-mi.org

Public Sector Consultants - Annelise Huber ahuber@pscinc.com

Baumann Consulting - Jonathan Lemmond J.Lemmon@baumann-us.com

Michigan Green Communities Network - Jamie Kidwell-Brix migreencommunities@gmail.com

SEEDS - Sarna Salzman – Executive Director, sarna@ecoseeds.org

City of Farmington Hills - Nate Geinzer ngeinzer@fhgov.com

Lenawee Now - Randy Yagiela transformationconnection@gmail.com

City of Dearborn - Mike Hecimovich mhecimovich@ci.dearborn.mi.us

Other interested parties:

Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association - Mary McGraw, cbsmary@gmail.com and/or Dave Konkle, konkle@toast.net

New Power Tour, Inc. - Melissa Davis, melissa@newpowertour.com

5. How many copies are the proposal are required? One part says one electronic PDF and one hard copy, the other calls for three copies.

Ans. Thanks for bringing the discrepancy to our attention. This was an error, which has since been corrected. Only one hard copy and one electronic copy are required.

6. How will MEO judge success of these projects over the grant period? Is it development of plans / energy management systems as well as implementation? What measures or metrics will you use to judge success over the longer term?

Ans. Both development of plans/energy management systems as well as implementation will be considered. Development of plans/energy management systems and/or benchmarking activities are a logical precursor to implementation of energy upgrades, however it is anticipated that priority projects will be identified during this process.

This phase of the CEM program will primarily focus on the establishment of a Community Energy Manager position and progression through / completion of CEM Best Practices. It is understood that there will be some variation in approaches among communities and that communities will likely not complete all Best Practices within the grant period. However, steps should be taken to prepare and position local governments for continued work in these areas beyond the grant period.

Primary metrics should include but are not limited to: Measures taken to support the success of the CEM position beyond the grant period (i.e., is the CEM position sustainable?), completion of CEM Best Practices, identification of priority projects, as well as energy savings, monetary savings, and greenhouse gas reductions from any implemented projects.

7. Municipal or Community projects? Pg. 10 of the RFP states that "...CEMs are also the local champion and information resource for other energy projects/programs within the community."

a. **Does the CEM help foster other energy and sustainability initiatives within the community among residents and businesses? Or is the CEM's focus on municipal facilities?**

Ans. The CEM is a resource for both municipal facilities and the broader community. It is expected that a CEM would focus first on municipal operations in the early stages of a CEM program and then move to include support for other community projects.

- b. **Would a municipal staff member's time spent on fostering community-wide energy or sustainability initiatives be considered as eligible in-kind match for this project?**

Ans. Yes, provided that this was in the context of a broader community energy management strategy.

8. **How do we find out which communities are actively pursuing the MEDC's RRC certification?**

Ans. Please refer to the Redevelopment Ready Communities Map posted at: <http://www.michiganbusiness.org/community/development-assistance/#rrc>. Communities at any stage listed on the map are considered to be participating in the program for the purposes of this RFP.

9. **The RFP states that a priority of the program is to "showcase energy efficiency and/or renewable energy as an affordable, reliable, adaptable, and environmentally protective solution for Michigan's energy future." Would the CEM's or municipality's time spent on communicating the project's goals, objectives and successes to residents and businesses be considered as eligible under this funding opportunity?**

Ans. Yes; however the bulk of the time should focus on program development, strategic energy planning, and technical assistance.

10. **Can communities that apply to participate in the Michigan Energy Office's Benchmarking RFP also participate in the Michigan Energy Office's Community Energy Management RFP? It's understood that the state reserves the right to identify communities that are priority for funding. It's also understood that funding for one RFP cannot be considered as match for another.**

Ans. Yes

11. **Letter of Commitment. Is it necessary to receive a signed original Letter of Commitment from a community, or will a scanned copy suffice?**

Ans. Scanned letters of commitment are sufficient.

12. **In addition to municipal building energy use, does this RFP cover streetlights, traffic signals, and fleets?**

Ans. The purchase or installation of equipment is not an eligible grant-funded cost, but streetlights, traffic signals, and fleets, in addition to municipal building energy use, are all relevant to the scope of a CEM program.

13. **If the city contracts with a building facilities manager whose time will be required for implementing the project, can the contractor's time be counted as city match?**

Ans. Yes

14. Is water efficiency a measure covered by this funding opportunity? Is the CEM's or municipality's time related to entering water bills into the EPA ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool eligible under this RFP?

Ans. Yes. This can be included as part of a community's energy management strategy. This would be most appropriate as a match activity.

15. If non-profit organizations are partnered together, does the award cap of \$100,000 increase?

Ans. No, while we encourage partnership efforts, the \$100,000 cap is not expected to increase. You can make the case for more, which we may consider, but we hope to fund more than one proposal and type of proposal. However, we reserve the right to negotiate the budget and scope of any proposal received in response to this RFP to meet the best interests of the State and this program. Keep in mind also that whatever amount you request, you will be expected to provide a minimum 1:1 match.

16. From section I-G, is a paper application required in addition to the electronic application or can a signed pdf emailed to you suffice?

Ans. Yes, we still require both a paper application (with an original signature) along with the signed PDF and both must be received by the deadline.

17. Our project gathered a phenomenal amount of letters of support for another program. Will these letters of commitment work for the purposes of this RFP?

Ans. No. Please request new letters of support specific to this project/RFP.

18. We are working currently with grants from other sources. Can these count as match?

Ans. The proposed activities need to occur within the grant period. Assuming that the activities you are proposing to do under the CEM grant are eligible uses of the other grant funds according to the scope of work of that program, yes.

19. Is the educational requirement for the Community Energy Manager strict?

Ans. We have updated the language in our sample position description to indicate that a Bachelor's degree is "preferred". We believe this level of education is appropriate for most situations. However, as this is only a template, sufficient education and experience is ultimately up to the community to determine.

20. Other communities beyond those listed in Section III-F of the RFP are expected to be impacted by anticipated coal plant closures. Can they be included in our proposal?

Ans. Yes. Our list of priority cities/counties was based on the immediate vicinity of the impacted facilities, but if other communities are expected to be highly impacted, you are welcome and encouraged to include them.