

Energy Innovation Fund

Request for Proposals

2026 – 2027 Funding Cycle



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Energy Innovation Fund.

The Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute (TEPRI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing practical energy solutions that strengthen communities and improve quality of life across Texas. Through pilot projects, research, and community engagement, TEPRI works alongside local organizations to address energy challenges for Texans.

The Energy Innovation Fund, funded by Google and administered by TEPRI, was created to support innovative, community-driven solutions that improve energy affordability, strengthen resilience, expand access to energy technologies, and build workforce capacity.

We invite you to review this Request for Proposals and consider how your organization and partnerships can help address local energy challenges and create lasting community impact.

We also recognize that some of the most promising ideas begin before a project is fully defined. If you have a project idea that aligns with the Fund's goals but would benefit from further development, we encourage you to connect with TEPRI. We may be able to provide guidance and technical assistance to help refine your project concept and prepare an application. Technical assistance is provided independently of the grant review process and does not guarantee funding or influence funding decisions.

We recognize that meaningful change happens because of the dedication of community partners who work every day to serve their communities. Thank you for the work you do and for your commitment to building stronger, more resilient communities across Texas. We look forward to learning more about your work, your ideas, and the communities you serve.

Sincerely,

Erin Harper
Project Manager
Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute (TEPRI)



Overview

The Texas Energy Innovation Fund ("Fund") is a grantmaking initiative funded by Google and administered by the Texas Energy Poverty Research Institute (TEPRI). The Fund was established to support innovative, community-driven solutions that improve energy affordability, strengthen community resilience, expand access to energy technologies, and build workforce capacity. Through this investment, the Fund seeks to support practical projects that address local energy challenges while creating measurable and lasting benefits for residents, small businesses, and community organizations.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), TEPRI invites eligible organizations to submit proposals for projects that advance the goals of the Texas Energy Innovation Fund within the Fund's priority service areas. For the inaugural 2026 funding cycle, \$2 million in competitive grant funding will be awarded. **The fund is accepting applications on a rolling basis through March 19, 2027.**

Fund Priorities

The Fund prioritizes investments that benefit low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities and the four priority Texas counties of Ellis, Haskell, Wilbarger, and Armstrong. Projects serving neighboring communities with a clear connection to one or more priority counties will also be considered. For the 2026 funding cycle, the Fund will prioritize investments in the following areas:

- **Rural Energy Innovation:** Projects that improve energy affordability, resilience, and access to energy solutions for residents, small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and community-serving facilities in rural areas.
- **Multifamily Housing Energy Solutions:** Projects that improve energy affordability, efficiency, and resilience for residents of multifamily housing communities. For purposes of this RFP, multifamily housing includes residential properties containing multiple dwelling units.

Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Nonprofit organizations
- Local governments
- Educational institutions
- Workforce development organizations
- Public agencies and special districts
- Tribal organizations, where applicable

Applications involving multiple organizations must identify an eligible applicant to serve as the lead applicant. **For-profit organizations may participate as project partners, contractors, or technical service providers but are not eligible to serve as the lead applicant.**

Project Eligibility

Projects may address a wide range of energy-related challenges and opportunities. Examples include:

- Energy efficiency and weatherization improvements
- Heat pumps or smart appliances
- Pre-weatherization and health and safety improvements
- Community solar initiatives
- Solar-plus-storage systems
- Community resilience hubs
- Energy workforce development programs
- Energy projects that advance the Fund's goals and demonstrate meaningful community benefit will also be considered.

The following activities and expenses **are NOT eligible for funding under this RFP**: Political activities, campaign activities, or lobbying efforts; debt repayment, refinancing, or loan servicing; endowments or reserve funds; general organizational operating expenses unrelated to the proposed project; fundraising activities or events; regranteeing activities or contributions to other grantmaking programs; or scholarships, tuition assistance, or direct cash assistance to individuals.

Geographic Eligibility

The Fund uses a three-tier geographic framework to recognize that energy, workforce, and community initiatives often extend beyond county boundaries. TEPRI reserves the right to make final geographic eligibility determinations consistent with the objectives of the Fund.

Tier	Geographic Criteria	Eligible Counties
Tier 1	The Fund's four designated target counties identified by Google and TEPRI.	Armstrong, Ellis, Haskell, Wilbarger
Tier 2	Counties that share a common border with a Tier 1 county.	Baylor, Briscoe, Carson, Dallas, Donley, Foard, Gray, Hardeman, Henderson, Hill, Johnson, Jones, Kaufman, King, Knox, Navarro, Potter, Randall, Shackelford, Stonewall, Swisher, Tarrant, Throckmorton, Wichita
Tier 3	Counties that are geographically adjacent to Tier 2 counties and meet criteria within the Fund's priority populations.	Callahan, Childress, Clay, Collingsworth, Cottle, Eastland, Erath, Fisher, Hall, Hood, Hutchinson, Jack, Mitchell, Moore, Nolan, Parker, Roberts, Stephens, Taylor, Wheeler, Wise, Young

Application Requirements and Process

The Energy Innovation Fund utilizes a two-step application process:

1. Applicants will first submit an Initial Project Concept that provides a 1-2 page overview of the proposed project, the community opportunity or need, and the alignment with the Energy Innovation Fund.
2. Following an initial review, selected applicants will be invited to submit a Full Proposal containing detailed organizational, project, budget, and supporting information.

Initial Project Concept Submission

The Initial Project Concept is intended to provide a concise overview of a proposed project and its potential alignment with the Energy Innovation Fund. In addition to their organizational information, applicants must provide:

- Project title
- Estimated funding request
- Geographic area served
- Brief Project Concept (maximum 1–2 pages) describing: The community need or opportunity, the proposed project or solution, the population or community expected to benefit, and how the project aligns with the goals of the Energy Innovation Fund

Full Proposal

Applicants whose Project Concepts successfully advance through the initial review process will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. Invited applicants will be required to outline their project scope, goals, structure and budget by providing responses to the following prompts below.

1. **Fund Priority Alignment:** Describe how your project directly serves or benefits residents and communities within the Fund's priority service funds (Rural and Multifamily) or areas (Ellis, Haskell, Wilbarger, and Armstrong counties), or neighboring communities.
2. **Project Approach:** Describe your project scope to address the outlined energy challenge, and how could this project serve as a model for replication or expansion in other communities.
3. **Organizational Readiness:** Describe your organization(s) key experiences, staffing, and resources it would bring to this project, and what potential implementation risks have you identified and prepared to mitigate.
4. **Project Funding and Sustainability:** Submit a comprehensive budget and narrative detailing the efficient use of grant funds to achieve project objectives. Include information regarding any leveraged financial or in-kind support, along with a strategy for sustaining operational and maintenance requirements following the conclusion of the funding cycle.

A full checklist of RFP requirements is in Appendix A, Applicant Guide.

As part of this process, TEPRI may provide technical assistance, recommendations, or guidance. Technical assistance is provided independently of the grant review process. Receiving technical assistance or an invitation to submit a Full Proposal does not guarantee funding and does not influence funding decisions.

Review and Selection Process

Full Proposals will undergo a multi-step review process.

1. TEPRI will review Full Proposals for eligibility, completeness, and alignment with RFP requirements. TEPRI may also conduct due diligence and request additional information from applicants as needed.
2. TEPRI will evaluate eligible Full Proposals and develop funding recommendations.
3. Funding recommendations will be presented to the Community Advisory Council for review.
4. Following consideration of Community Advisory Council feedback, TEPRI will finalize funding recommendations and submit them to Google for final approval.

Applicants will be notified following completion of the review and selection process.

Timeline

Milestone	Anticipated Timing
Request for Proposals (RFP) Released	September 2026
Application Submission Period	September 2026 – March 2027 (Rolling Basis)
Eligibility Review and Proposal Evaluation	September 2026 – May 2027 (Rolling Basis)
Award Notifications	Following Approval
Grant Agreement Execution	Following Award Notification
Project Implementation	Begins Following Grant Agreement Execution

Questions and Technical Assistance

Applicants may submit questions regarding this RFP, eligibility requirements, application requirements to TEPRI.

energyinnovationfund@tepri.org

Responses to questions that may be relevant to multiple applicants will be compiled and posted publicly on the Fund website.

Attachment A. Applicant Guide

This Applicant Guide provides additional information regarding the evaluation criteria used to assess Full Proposals. Applicants are encouraged to address the topics below when developing their applications.

Community and Energy Impact

Evaluates the extent to which the proposed project addresses a demonstrated community need and advances the Fund's energy goals by improving energy affordability, energy efficiency, energy resilience, access to energy technologies, workforce development, and other energy-related outcomes for residents, organizations, businesses, or communities within the Fund's priority service areas.

Reviewers will consider:

- The significance of the community needs being addressed.
- Anticipated impacts on energy affordability, energy efficiency, resilience, reliability, public health, safety, economic opportunity and workforce, or quality of life.
- Benefits to low-income households, rural communities, vulnerable populations, or historically underserved groups.
- Increased access to energy technologies.
- The extent to which the project creates measurable outcomes.
- The likelihood that project benefits will continue beyond the grant period.

Organizational Readiness

Assesses the applicant's organizational capacity and preparedness to successfully implement the proposed project within the proposed timeline and budget.

Reviewers will consider:

- The clarity and completeness of the project plan.
- Organizational capacity, including staffing, relevant experience, and the ability to successfully implement the project.
- The reasonableness of the proposed budget.
- The feasibility of the implementation schedule and major milestones.
- Identification of implementation risks and mitigation strategies.

Geographic Alignment

Evaluates how effectively the proposed project serves and benefits residents and communities within the Fund's priority service areas.

Reviewers will consider:

- Benefits to priority counties
- Demonstrated local need or challenge being addressed

Leverage

Evaluates how the applicant leverages available resources to strengthen the proposed project and increase its impact and long-term sustainability. Matching funds are not required. Reviewers will consider:

- The extent to which financial, in-kind, volunteer, or other community resources are leveraged, when appropriate.
- How leveraged resources strengthen project impact or long-term sustainability.

Innovation and Replication

Evaluates the extent to which the proposed project introduces innovative approaches or creates opportunities for broader application.

Reviewers will consider:

- Innovative approaches to addressing community energy challenges.
- Potential for replication, expansion, or broader application.
- The extent to which the project addresses unmet community needs

Full Proposal Document Checklist

Component	Information Required
Organization Information	• Organization name and contact • Tax information: Tax identification number (EIN), organization type • Organizational history and mission: Year organization was established, organizational mission, geographic area served, and relevant experience implementing similar projects
Project Description	• Project title • Funding amount requested • Detailed project description, including how the project advances one or more Energy Innovation Fund goals and priority service areas • Community need or challenge being addressed • Proposed solution and project activities • Target population and anticipated beneficiaries • Expected outcomes and measures of success • Project timeline and major milestones • Project partners and their roles, if applicable <i>For projects involving equipment, infrastructure, facilities, solar installations, battery storage systems, or other capital assets:</i> Applicants must describe ownership, operation, maintenance responsibilities, and how project benefits and ongoing operations will continue following the grant period.
Project Budget	• Detailed budget and narrative describing proposed expenses, leveraged resources, and other funding sources supporting the project • Anticipated operation and maintenance costs, if applicable, including how those costs will be supported following the grant period
Organizational Financial Information	• Current fiscal year organizational operating budget and the two most recent organizational financial statements. Audited financial statements preferred.
Supporting Documentation	• Legal status: Proof of your organization's legal status (e.g., 501(c)(3) determination letter) • Leadership: Staff leadership for project and current list of your Board of Directors Partnerships: Letters of commitment or support from any project partners • Site authorization: Documentation confirming site ownership, lease rights, easements, or property owner authorization for projects involving construction, facility improvements, or capital asset installation