

Questions and Answers
Centers for Alternative Fuels and Advanced Vehicle Technology in Central California
PON-14-606
February 10, 2015

The answers provided are based on the Energy Commission's understanding of what a question asks. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine whether or not their particular proposed project is eligible for funding, by reviewing the Eligibility Requirements in Section II. The Energy Commission cannot at this time give advice as to whether or not your particular project is eligible for funding, because all details are not known.

ADMINISTRATION/PROCESS

Q1 Is this going to be a three-year agreement? Is there a minimum duration?

A1 There is no minimum duration for a project under this solicitation. All work must be scheduled for completion by June 30, 2018.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Q2 There is a requirement to support two or more local agencies and businesses within the region. Since I am relatively new in the region, can you please give me a couple of examples as to what local agencies and businesses are qualified? Is there a list that I can refer to? Do you know someone or some company I can talk to?

A2 The Energy Commission does not have any suggestion on who to contact. However, you can refer to the Partnership Requirements on page 6 of the solicitation for examples of the types of agencies and businesses that may be considered.

Q3 My focus will be on promoting awareness and performing research on vehicle efficiency and technology comparison. Can these activities be funded?

A3 Promoting awareness of alternative fuels and advanced vehicle technologies may be eligible. Eligible activities are listed in the Eligible Projects section on page 5 of the PON-14-606. Please also refer to the project types/activities that are not eligible for funding on page 6 of PON-14-606 and please note that applications will be scored heavily based on the Project Summary evaluation criteria. Performing research is not an eligible activity.

Q4 Are research activities allowable, such as faculty focused on alternative fuel research?

A4 No.

Q5 Can UC Merced provide match funding in the form of offices, vehicles, and testing infrastructure?

A5 Vehicle and infrastructure costs are not eligible as reimbursable or match share expenditures under this solicitation. The eligibility of costs related to the use of the offices depends upon the use of those offices. Offices that are used to conduct eligible activities are considered eligible expenditures under the proposed project. All costs (reimbursable and match share) must be allowable, documentable, reasonable and allocable to the proposed project.

Q6 Is assisting others to build projects to bring forward to the Energy Commission an eligible activity?

A6 No.

Q7 Can a Center serve only one type of alternative fuel and/or multiple types of alternative fuel?

A7 Yes. Proposed Centers are allowed to focus on either one or multiple alternative fuel types.

Q8 We already have a physical office in Bakersfield. Can we open another in Fresno?

A8 Yes, as long as the proposed Center meets requirements contained in the solicitation.

Q9 Can we develop a Center to build electric vehicles?

A9 No. Manufacturing facilities are not eligible under this solicitation. The Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program (ARFVTP) may provide funding for alternative fuel manufacturing projects through other future solicitations. Please see www.energy.ca.gov/contracts for more information on current funding opportunities.

Q10 Can a Center host training programs such as local code enforcement or CNG tank inspection?

A10 Training programs may be an eligible activity as long as conducting training programs is not an activity mandated to be undertaken by law or other requirement. Please see California Health and Safety Code section 44271(C) for more information.

Q11 Can a Center train agencies on EVSE regulations/permitting even if the regulations are required?

A11 Training programs may be an eligible activity as long as conducting training programs is not an activity mandated to be undertaken by law or other requirement. Please see California Health and Safety Code section 44271(C) for more information.

Q12 Can a grassroots Center have multiple satellites?

A12 Yes, as long as the satellites are within the defined region.

Q13 Can we sponsor other non-profit organizations and give flat amount of money to conduct training and develop materials? Do they need to show time and materials used in the budget form?

A13 Those non-profit organizations would be considered subcontractors under the agreement. If the total dollar amount that goes to a subcontractor is above \$100,000 or 25% or more of the total Energy Commission funds requested, then detailed information is required in the budget form. Please see General Budget Worksheet Instructions in the Budget Forms (Attachment 05).

Q14 Can we charge a nominal fee for workshops, etc. to sustain the proposed Center beyond initial funding?

A14 No, not during the agreement term.

Q15 Are there vendor procurement requirements? Is there any preference given to one vendor over another?

A15 The procurement requirements are stated in the Terms and Conditions (Attachment 09 of this solicitation). No vendor preference will be given.

Q16 Sustainability – Could a Center start charging membership fees after the Energy Commission’s agreement period has ended?

A16 Yes.

Q17 Can the proposed Center have infrastructure for every fuel type? Can the Energy Commission funding pay for equipment?

A17 Fueling infrastructure costs are not eligible under this solicitation as either a reimbursable or match share expense. However, Centers are not prohibited from including fueling infrastructure as long as it is not part of the proposed project under this solicitation. The Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program (ARFVTP) may provide funding for alternative fuel infrastructure and vehicle projects through other future solicitations. Please see www.energy.ca.gov/contracts for more information on current funding opportunities.

Q18 Can we conduct fundraising activities?

A18 Yes, as long as the fundraising activities meet the Eligibility Requirements under this solicitation.

Q19 Can we approach public or private sector partners to donate?

A19 Yes.

MATCH FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Q20 Can match funds be used for grant writing to apply for Energy Commission solicitations?

A20 No.

Q21 Can other Energy Commission funds be used as match funding?

A21 No.

Q22 Can other state agency's AB118 funds be used as match funding?

A22 Yes, as long as the funds do not originate from Energy Commission funding programs.

Q23 Can infrastructure funded by the Energy Commission in the past be used as match funding if moved to the proposed Center?

A23 No.

Q24 Can we do activities that are not allowed under the solicitation using outside contributions without showing it as match funding?

A24 Yes.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q25 Any long range vision for opening more Centers?

A25 The Energy Commission currently does not have any more funding allocated to this category in the Investment Plan. However, the Energy Commission will assess the success of funded Centers to inform future Investment Plan.

Q26 Any plans to integrate with the IHUB program in Livermore?

A26 No. However, leveraging activities are encouraged and applicants are free to partner with existing centers/programs as long as the proposed Center activities are eligible under this solicitation.

Q27 What do other Centers that were funded under the PON-13-605 look like?

A27 For parties interested in finding out what other past funded Centers are doing, please request a copy of their applications from Sandra Raymos, Commission Agreement Officer. However, please note that PON 14-606 and PON-13-605 have different requirements and referring to the Centers under PON-13-605 may not necessarily be helpful in scoring higher under this solicitation.

Q28 What are the expected deliverables? Are there certain target audiences for a Center? What are the objectives of having a Center in Central California?

A28 There are no expected deliverables or certain target audiences. Applicants are expected to know/determine what Central California needs and should decide appropriate deliverables and target audiences for the proposed Center. The objectives of having a Center in Central California are to look at the region's unique sectors and problems and provide region specific solutions.

Q29 Are there any activities that are encouraged?

A29 No, the Energy Commission is not encouraging any activity over another as long as the proposed activities are eligible and increase the public awareness and deployment of alternative fuels and advanced vehicle technologies in Central California.

Q30 Regions are broken up differently for Central California in this solicitation compared to the last solicitation, PON-13-605. Will there be any overlap with the last solicitation's region?

A30 The Centers funded under PON-13-605 do not cover areas that overlap with the defined region under this solicitation.

Q31 Sustainability of Center – what happens to the Center after the end of the Energy Commission agreement period?

A31 It is up to applicants to propose how to implement the project's sustainably. One of the evaluation criteria is, "The applicant demonstrates a viable and credible plan to continue operating the proposed project beyond the term of the Energy Commission's funding agreement." Please see the Terms and Conditions (Attachment 09) for provisions that survive the end of the agreement period, such as Equipment. Applicants should not anticipate future Energy Commission funding support for the continued operations of the proposed center.

Q32 Does an application receive points for having grant writing to gain new funding to support the proposed Center?

A32 Applications that demonstrate a viable and credible plan to continue operating the proposed project beyond the term of the Energy Commission's funding agreement may receive a higher score.

Q33 Is there a preferential treatment for locating a Center in disadvantaged communities?

A33 Yes, five points are allocated to the Expected Economic Benefits evaluation criteria on page 19 of PON-14-606 which, among other things, evaluates the degree to which "the proposed project will benefit economically distressed and/or high unemployment areas within Central California."

Q34 How detailed do Scope of Work and Schedule of Products and Due Dates need to be? Can we leave some creativity to whoever comes in as a subcontractor and manages the operation?

A34 The description of activities proposed in the Project Narrative must conform to the Tasks described in the Scope of Work and all the tasks must have a schedule. Reviewing the Scope of Work documents from passing applications from other solicitations may help understand the level of details needed in the Scope of Work and the Schedule. If interested, please contact Sandra Raymos, Commission Agreement Officer.

Q35 How much of the budget should be dedicated to administration?

A35 There is no minimum or maximum for administrative costs. Please note that applications will be evaluated based on how applicants minimize administration and overhead costs.