



BOULDER ENERGY CHALLENGE

Boulder Energy Challenge Grant Program 2014 Application Guidelines

Application Deadline: June 27, 2014

SUMMARY

The City of Boulder seeks proposals for the first round of the Boulder Energy Challenge (BEC) Grant Program (the “Program”), which is designed to solicit innovative solutions from the community for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Boulder. This new program is funded by the Climate Action Plan (CAP) tax and reflects the value in pairing public sector programs and services with market-driven efforts to achieve Boulder’s climate commitment goals. The program provides funding for pilot projects, concept feasibility or demonstration, new product or service development, education and behavior change, and other innovative projects to significantly reduce GHG emissions.

This guidelines document details the structure of the program, including the application and evaluation process. In order to apply interested parties must submit a Letter of Intent to Apply through the Program’s website (www.BoulderEnergyChallenge.com) and submit a four part application that includes a concept video, narrative document, project budget and project work plan. Projects will be evaluated through a four step process by City of Boulder staff and a panel of community experts that have been involved in the program design. Staff will conduct an initial eligibility screening on a pass/fail basis to ensure that the proposal meets the program eligibility requirements and that the application is complete. Accepted proposals will then receive a merit evaluation score based on the evaluation criteria in this document. Proposals that meet a minimum threshold in the merit evaluation will be interviewed and finalists will be chosen. The final part of the evaluation process will be a Community Showcase event for the finalists with an element of public participation. The Program will award grants ranging from \$10,000 - \$100,000 to a desired portfolio of five to ten projects, with a total pool of funds of approximately \$300,000.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF PROGRAM

The objectives of the 2014-2015 Boulder Energy Challenge are to:

- reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Boulder;

- support the development and commercialization of cutting-edge emission reduction technologies and strategies that lead to private sector market adoption; and
- stimulate the growth of a low carbon innovation sector in the City of Boulder.

The 2014-2015 program will primarily focus on energy efficiency and renewable energy related submissions, however other proposals will be considered if received.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants include businesses, nonprofits, academic institutions and individuals. The applicant does not need to be based in the City of Boulder; however project implementation must occur in Boulder. There is no cost-share requirement to apply, however additional funding outside of a BEC grant will earn the applicant additional points in the evaluation process.

Types of Eligible Projects:

1. **Pilot projects** – A limited test or trial of a technology, strategy, application, etc.
2. **Concept feasibility/demonstration** – An analysis or testing of the viability of a new idea.
3. **New product/service development** – The funding of continued development of a new product or service that has already demonstrated viability.
4. **Education and behavior change** – Community education and mobilization efforts aimed at significantly altering behavior that result in emissions reductions
5. **Other innovative projects to significantly reduce emissions**

TIMELINE

Release of Grant Application Documents	May 12, 2014
Website Letter of Intent to Apply Due	May 30, 2014
Grant Applications Due	June 27, 2014 by 5pm MDT
Application Interviews	Weeks of July 14 th and 21 st , 2014
Community Showcase Event (tentative)	July 31, 2014
Final Awards Notification	Early August 2014

HOW TO APPLY

Interested parties must fill out the Letter of Intent to Apply, available at the program website (www.BoulderEnergyFuture.com) by May 30, 2014.

The BEC grant application consists of four parts.

1. **Concept Video** (3-4 min) – Applicants must submit a self-narrating presentation in any style. Examples include but are not limited to a narrated PowerPoint, Prezi, pitch video or other creative style. The video must include the following elements:
 - a. Identification of the energy challenge to be addressed and its importance.
 - b. Description of the project and how it is both innovative and viable.

- c. Potential of the proposed project, including:
 - i. a description of alternative solutions and an explanation of what distinguishes this solution from them,
 - ii. identification of the barriers to success and project risks and how those will be addressed, and
 - iii. a description of how the project can be commercialized (if appropriate).
 - d. Why the proposing project team is the team to address this energy challenge.
2. **Narrative Document** (limited to 6 pages) – must include the following elements:
- a. A more in-depth description of project and grant amount being requested.
 - b. Project benefits, including:
 - i. a detailed description and quantification of the energy and greenhouse gas reduction benefits expected from the project,
 - ii. an explanation of what co-benefits to the community (if any) the project has that are not directly quantified in the proposal, and
 - iii. an explanation of how many people will be impacted or able to participate in the project and if there are any limitations on who can participate.
 - c. An installation plan (if appropriate).
 - d. Applicant team qualifications, including the relevant skills and experience of the application team members demonstrating their ability to execute the project.
 - e. An explanation of any regulatory barriers to implementing the project.
 - f. A description of other funding (past or present) supporting the project (if applicable).
 - g. Project outcomes anticipated (see section below on “Project Monitoring and Evaluation”) and methods applicant will use to measure success.
 - h. Name of the Project Liaison – All applicants are required to identify a project liaison, whose responsibilities include project oversight and quarterly reporting to city staff, including budget status and progress on project milestones.

Applicants must also include the following attachments (please see templates available on the Program website):

- 3. Project work plan describing specific milestones that will be achieved with funding
- 4. Project budget
- 5. Application cover sheet

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is complete and properly submitted. The City of Boulder may request supplemental materials from the applicant and such materials must be submitted within ten (10) days of the request or the application may be rejected without further review.

Completed applications, including all required documentation, should be submitted to Jamie Harkins at harkinsj@bouldercolorado.gov. “Boulder Energy Challenge Application” must appear in the email

subject line. To submit the concept video applicants may upload the video file to youtube.com and include the link in the application email submission (preferred method) or attach a video file (MP4, MOV, WMV, or AVI formats) to the email submission. All applications will receive an electronic confirmation of receipt from City of Boulder staff.

Completed Applications must be received no later than **Friday, June 27, 2014 at 5:00pm MDT.**

SELECTION CRITERIA

Projects will be evaluated through a four step process. Staff will conduct an initial eligibility screening on a pass/fail basis to ensure that the proposal meets the program eligibility requirements and that the application is complete. Accepted proposals will then receive a merit evaluation score from staff and a panel of community experts based on the evaluation criteria below. Proposals that meet a minimum threshold in the merit evaluation will be interviewed by the group and finalists will be chosen. The final part of the evaluation process will be a Community Showcase event for the finalists with an element of public participation.

Eligibility Screening Criteria (Pass/Fail)

- (1) The proposal addresses the objectives of the program.
- (2) The proposal fits within the 2014 scope of the program.
- (3) The proposal quantifies the projected energy use reductions or how much zero carbon energy the project will add to the Boulder system.
- (4) The proposed project is not already present in the competitive marketplace.

Merit Evaluation Criteria

Proposals that pass the initial eligibility screening will receive a merit evaluation score based on two main criteria: (1) ability of the project to meet the program objectives, and (2) project feasibility.

- (1) Ability of meet program objectives – in assessing each project’s ability to meet the objectives, evaluators will consider:
 - a. Projected energy use reductions (electricity, natural gas or petroleum) or how much zero carbon energy the project will add to the Boulder system
 - b. Degree of innovation – addresses an existing barrier
 - c. Scalability
 - d. Impact – longevity of impact, number of people reached, equitable distribution of project benefits or ability to participate across social and economic groups
- (2) Project feasibility – in assessing each project’s feasibility, evaluators will consider:
 - a. Readiness and time to benefit – ability of a project to be completed in grant period
 - b. Team qualifications
 - c. Proposal work plan
 - d. Budget/cost-effectiveness

In additional, bonus merit evaluation points will be earned in three instances:

- (1) Boulder location – the proposing entity is based in the City of Boulder
- (2) Collaboration – the proposal is a result of a collaboration of partners
- (3) Cost-share – the project has funding from sources other than the Boulder Energy Challenge

Community Showcase Event

The Community Showcase will give finalists an opportunity to pitch their project to attendees and give the community an opportunity to provide input to the evaluation process. This event will provide a great opportunity to promote the program and the finalists and for the public to get engaged and excited about participating.

Final Selection

Following the Community Showcase event the Working Group will make funding recommendations to city staff. The City Manager will make a final decision on funded projects, which will be announced to the community.

PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Project performance will be evaluated based on an outcomes approach, which is an approach to planning, managing and evaluating projects that encourages clarity around what the project is *doing* and what it is *changing*. All funded projects will meet with city staff to review the work plan and determine project milestones for reporting, as well as create an Outcome Measurement Framework so that upon completion the accomplishments of the project can be easily reported to the community. An example of how to create and use Outcome Measurement Frameworks is available at http://www.smartfund.ca/docs/smart_outcomes_guide.pdf. Boulder Energy Challenge projects should pursue outcomes that can generally fall into four different categories:

- Engagement (for participant-centric projects) or Traction (for technology projects)
- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Environmental Benefits

Funded projects will be required to submit quarterly reporting to the City of Boulder, including budget status and progress on project tasks/milestones. All applicants are required to identify a Project Liaison in the application narrative whose responsibilities include providing this reporting to the city, as well as meeting with city staff at regular intervals to discuss project progress and any issues that arise.

BUDGET & PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

This grant will be paid to grantees in installments, based on the completion of milestones to be laid out in the project work plan. Up to 40% of the total grant may be distributed upon review of the project work plan and development of Outcome Measurement Framework, subject to City of Boulder staff discretion. An installment plan for the remaining grant funds will be determined at that time.

Expenses incurred prior to grant award and execution of a grant agreement with the City of Boulder will not qualify as part of the project budget. All applicants should reserve an appropriate portion of their budget for the collection of data and monitoring the performance of their project as outlined in the Outcome Measurement Framework that is developed.

Grantees shall maintain reasonable insurance to cover projects if appropriate. The city may request proof of such insurance at the city's discretion.

Please note that project applications are not confidential and should not include proprietary information that cannot be disclosed to the public. Submitted concept videos may be used to promote the program and the community showcase event.

CONTACT INFORMATION

City of Boulder, Department of Community Planning + Sustainability
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