**PROGRAM STATEMENT**

**Funding Opportunity CAG2024-5**

Community Resilience Program Community Action Grant Program

**Issued by:**

Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

[Community Resilience Partnership](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership)

111 Sewall Street

Augusta, ME 04330

Issue Date: September 12, 2024

**PROPOSAL DUE DATE: TUESDAY, December 17, 2024; 5:00 P.M.**

All communication regarding this Program Statement should be sent to

Ashley Krulik, Community Resilience Partnership Program Manager, [ashley.krulik@maine.gov](mailto:ashley.krulik@maine.gov).

**Informational webinar: September 26, 2024; 1:00p.m.**

Zoom Registration Link: <https://mainestate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RZQmGXVsTDyBhR0-r0nwxw>

A recording will be posted at: <https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership>



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**SECTION 1. BACKGROUND**

The [Community Resilience Partnership](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership) provides grants and technical assistance to municipal governments, Tribal Governments, plantations, townships, or unorganized territories in Maine (“Communities”) for projects that reduce energy use and costs, transition to clean energy and make communities more resilient to climate change impacts such as flooding, extreme temperatures, and public health risks.

Communities – those that have already taken significant climate action as well as those considering their early steps – are eligible for Community Action Grants upon completion of the [program’s enrollment requirements](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/support).

Communities that would like assistance completing enrollment activities and applying for Community Action Grants are encouraged to partner with [Service Provider Organizations](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/provider). The Service Provider Grant Program Statement ([SPG2024-5](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/grants)) is available to support this assistance to communities.

* 1. **Definitions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Community** | A municipal government, Tribal Government, plantation, township, or unorganized territory in Maine. |
| **GOPIF** | Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future |
| **Group** | Multiple communities submitting a single joint application for grant funding. |
| **Community Action Grant** | Upon enrollment in the Community Resilience Partnership, communities are eligible for Community Action Grants for projects that reduce energy use and costs, transition to clean energy, and make communities in Maine more resilient to climate change. |
| **Service Provider Grant** | Grant to a service provider to assist a Group of communities in Maine to prepare for and enroll in the Community Resilience Partnership and then to apply for grant funds to implement priority climate and energy projects.    Please see [SPG2024-5](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/grants) – Service Provider Grant Program Statement for more information. |

* 1. **Eligibility**

There are two (2) eligible types of applicants for the Community Action Grant:

1. Individual Communities, a municipal government, Tribal Government, plantation, township, or unorganized territory in Maine, who are enrolled in the [Community Resilience Partnership](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/).
   1. Applicants may submit enrollment materials through the [enrollment portal](https://me.accessgov.com/governor/Forms/Page/governor/mcrp/) simultaneously with submitting their grant application. (Unorganized territories, townships, and plantations are eligible and are strongly encouraged to work with a Service Provider to complete the enrollment process.)
2. Multiple Communities may apply jointly for projects that address mutual goals and have interrelated scopes of work.
   1. All communities participating in the application must be enrolled in the Partnership at the time the grant application is submitted or submit enrollment materials through the [enrollment portal](https://me.accessgov.com/governor/Forms/Page/governor/mcrp/) simultaneously with the grant application.
   2. Service Providers may apply on behalf of groups of communities only for actions listed in the List of Community Actions (available [here](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2024-09_2.xlsx)). Letters of support must be provided from each community in the proposed group.
   3. In a multi-community application, the communities are required to designate a lead applicant. The lead applicant is expected to receive the grant funds and manage the contracting and grant reporting on behalf of the partner communities. The communities may wish to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that spells out the responsibilities of each community. If an MOU is established, GOPIF may request a copy of the document during the grant contracting phase.

A community may participate in no more than one (1) Community Action Grant application in a grant round.

Communities that already have an active Community Action Grant from a previous round are eligible to apply in this round but may not apply for new funds to support a previous scope of work.

School districts, water and sewer districts, neighborhood associations, and similar entities are not eligible to be primary applicants but are encouraged to partner with a municipality or other eligible entity described above.

* 1. **Grant Size and Duration**

The Community Resilience Partnership plans to allocate approximately $7,480,000 for Community Action Grants during this grant round. GOPIF may award all, part, or none of this allocation at its discretion. A portion of this funding derives from federal sources and may carry additional federal requirements. Successful applicants will be notified if their award contains federal funding.

Of the total amount, approximately $1.6 million is available for projects related to energy efficiency and clean energy, and approximately $5.8 million is available for projects related to vulnerability and resilience. GOPIF will pair successful applications with the most appropriate funding source.

Individual communities are eligible for a minimum award of $5,000 and a maximum award of $75,000. Groups of communities applying jointly are eligible for awards of up to $175,000.

Up to $5,000 of additional funding may be made available at GOPIF’s discretion to federally funded grant awardees to administer the grant in compliance with federal guidelines (see Section 2.2).

Grants are anticipated to be awarded in March 2025, with an expected start date on or after March 24, 2025. Contract terms will be up to two (2) years, as specified by the applicant’s proposal.

**1.4 Future Grant Rounds**

The next Community Action Grant round is anticipated to have a deadline in August 2025, subject to change with availability of funding.

**1.5 Cancellation Notice**

The Community Resilience Partnership reserves the right to cancel this Program Statement at any time.

**1.6 Final Action on Grant Awards**

Awards made through this program are considered final and are not subject to internal agency appeal. Any person aggrieved by a decision may pursue judicial review according to the provisions of 5 MRS§§ 11001 – 11008 within 30 days of the award announcement.

**1.7 Contact information**

Questions about this Program Statement should be sent via email to [ashley.krulik@maine.gov](mailto:ashley.krulik@maine.gov).

**1.8 Information Sharing**

The Community Resilience Partnership may share enrollment materials, grant applications, and related community information with other state agencies and contracted organizations to improve awareness of community needs, priorities, and opportunities to provide assistance.

**SECTION 2. GRANT PROGRAM DETAILS**

**2.1 Description**

The Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) is seeking applications for Community Action Grants as defined in this Program Statement. This document provides the Application Form to be used for submittal, instructions for submitting applications, the procedure, and criteria by which the awarded Applicants will be selected.

The [List of Community Actions](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2024-09_2.xlsx) offers guidance for communities starting on climate plans and incentivize a baseline level of climate action across the state. The two grant options provide flexibility by allowing communities to choose actions from the List that are most relevant and feasible, while also providing support for community climate and energy priorities that may not appear on the List of Community Actions.

* 1. **Eligible Uses of Funds**

There are two types of Community Action Grants:

1. No-match grants to support implementation of one or more activities in the [List of Community Actions](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2024-09_2.xlsx), a list of climate mitigation and adaptation activities that align with the strategies in the state’s climate action plan, [Maine Won’t Wait](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf): A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action. If an applicant is unsure of whether a project fits within the list of community actions, please contact Ashley Krulik, [ashley.krulik@maine.gov](mailto:ashley.krulik@maine.gov) for guidance.
2. Grants to support other community-defined climate and energy capacity building, planning, and implementation priorities. A cost-share (match) will apply, as described in the Table 1 below.

Applicants are encouraged to utilize Community Action Grants as match to leverage federal grant funds as allowed by those programs. Community Action Grants may also be used to close project funding gaps for other state funding programs, in accordance with (i) or (ii) above. It is the applicant’s responsibility to consult the rules for the federal or state funding programs if the Community Action Grant will be designated as cost-share or match. Community Action Grants with funding derived from federal sources may not be eligible to be used as state or federal match.

Applicants with energy-related projects are strongly encouraged to incorporate the federal tax credit of up to 30% of eligible project costs in their application. See Section 2.5, Subsection F for more information.

Certain eligible activities from the [List of Community Actions](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2024-09_2.xlsx) carry special instructions or limitations. **It is the applicants’ responsibility to review the list and ensure that the proposed activities meet all eligibility requirements.** Please see Appendix for activities with special instructions and guidance.

Note that road construction, stormwater infrastructure/culverts, and structural building improvements are not eligible uses of Community Action Grant funds. If unsure of whether a project is eligible for grant funding, please contact Ashley Krulik, [ashley.krulik@maine.gov](mailto:ashley.krulik@maine.gov) for guidance.

* 1. **Cost-Share (or Match)**

There is no local cost share for Community Action Grants that implement activities from the [List of Community Actions.](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2024-09_2.xlsx)

A cost share *will* apply for Community Action Grants that implement community climate and energy priorities other than those listed in the List of Community Actions. The cost-share is structured in a tiered approach. In-kind match is permitted.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tier** | **Description** | **Cost-share for activities not listed in the List of Community Actions** |
| Tier 1 | Communities with populations less than 4,000 | 10% |
| Tier 2 | Communities with EITHER populations between 4,000 and 10,000 OR tax assessment less than $25 million (according to State Revenue Sharing data). | 10% |
| Tier 3 | Communities with populations greater than 10,000 AND tax assessment greater than $25 million (according to State Revenue Sharing data) | 20% |

* 1. **Social Equity and Engagement**

Maine’s climate response must ensure shared benefits across diverse populations of Maine people. Applicants should include robust community engagement in their action grant proposals (for example, inclusive planning processes so that diverse, underrepresented, and at-risk community voices are able to participate).

Climate change impacts will create the greatest hardships for already marginalized communities. Communities must identify and promote solutions to help the people who are most vulnerable to climate impacts. Applicants should consider the potential benefits of their proposed climate action projects and describe how the project distributes those benefits equitably.

The Maine Social Vulnerability Index is used by this grant program to understand socio-economic vulnerabilities that may be unique to a community. This Index was recently updated utilizing 2020 US Census data and new vulnerability indicators, resulting in changes in categorization for some communities. Applicants should reference the updated [Maine Social Vulnerability Index](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/SVI%20Communities%20Map_List_2024.08.14_1.pdf) to determine the current community vulnerability categorization.

Community engagement and equity considerations are incorporated into the scoring criteria for the Applicant’s Scope of Work, see Section 2.5, E. Scope of Work, for more information.

* 1. **Application Guidelines and Required Format**

A complete and scoreable application for funding will include the following components. Applicants should use the application form on page 14 to address each component.

1. **Criteria 1: General Information, Eligibility, and Application Information**

Applicants must complete the following documents as part of their application:

* Application Cover Page & General Assurances
* Eligibility and Applicant Information (see Section 1.2 above)

1. **Criteria 2: Previous Community Action Grant status**

If applicable, Applicants must provide information on previously received Community Action Grants including the status of active Community Action Grants from previous rounds and whether the project is meeting the proposed timeline and outcomes. Applicants who are not meeting the requirements of their current grant agreement may not be eligible for an additional grant.

1. **Criteria 3: Community Characteristics**

Additional application scoring points are available for communities with small- and medium-sized populations and communities with high and medium social vulnerability.

Applicants should refer to the [Maine Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/SVI%20Communities%20Map_List_2024.08.14_1.pdf) [categorization information](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/SVI%20Communities%20Map_List_2024.08.14_1.pdf) to complete the Community Characteristics section of the application form.

1. **Criteria 4: Maine Won’t Wait Strategy and Action(s)**

For no-match grants, the Applicant must identify the action(s) from the [List of Community Actions](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2024-09_2.xlsx) that the project will implement.

For grants to support other community-defined climate priorities, Applicants must describe the project and how it aligns with the strategies of [Maine Won’t Wait](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf), and must complete the cost-share table in the budget worksheet.

1. **Criteria 5: Scope of Work**

* Project Description - Describe the proposed project, including specific tasks to be undertaken and the final deliverables (for example, number of heat pumps installed or the components of a plan to be developed) resulting from the work.
* Project Timeline - Describe the timeline for completing each task or deliverable and the expected completion of the project.
* Need for the Project - Describe the need for the project. Why is this project a community priority?
* Project Outcomes - Describe the expected outcomes from completion of this project. This may include expected energy efficiency outcomes such as cost savings, kilowatt-hours of reduced energy consumption or renewable energy generation, or gallons of fuel reduction. This could also include resilience outcomes, such as increased preparation for extreme weather events, increased ability to manage sea level rise, increased resources for vulnerable community members, etc. Provide explanations for how these outcomes were estimated.
* Project Management - Describe the roles and responsibilities that will be assigned to key staff, contractors, and project partners to ensure successful completion of this scope of work and achieving the expected outcomes.
* Approach to community engagement and equity considerations - Describe specific actions that will be taken to include a diverse group of community stakeholders in the project during the grant period, including disadvantaged and more vulnerable community members. (Any public engagement that led up to this application is appreciated. However, please focus the response here on engagement activities that will happen during the project timeline.) Who in your community will be the most affected by climate change impacts? Also describe specific project benefits and which members of the community will benefit most from them.

1. **Criteria 6: Budget Proposal**

Applicants must provide a Budget Narrative and Budget. The Budget Worksheet (sample provided in Table 1) should list the costs for each task within the scope of work. The Budget Narrative should describe how the costs for each task were determined. Estimated hours/rate and vendor estimates are encouraged.

Eligible costs are limited to those incurred during the grant period. Expenses incurred prior to or after the grant period are not eligible to be included in the budget.

For grants to support other community-defined climate priorities not listed in the [List of Community Actions](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/List%20of%20Community%20Actions_2024-09_2.xlsx), applicants must complete the cost-share table in the budget worksheet. In-kind match is permitted. In-kind match is the value of any real property, equipment, goods, or services contributed to the grant that would have been eligible costs. Expenses incurred prior to or after the grant period are not eligible to be included in the budget as match.

*Table 1: Cost-Share Table (if applicable)*

|  |
| --- |
| Which cost share applies to the lead applicant?  What is the project cost share amount?  A cost share *will* apply For Climate Action Grants that implement other community climate and energy priorities (i.e., activities not found in the Community Action Inventory).  Tier 1: Communities with populations less than 4,000  Tier 2: Communities with EITHER populations between 4,000 and 10,000 OR tax assessment less than $25 million (according to State Revenue Sharing data).  Tier 3: Communities with populations greater than 10,000 AND tax assessment greater than $25 million (according to State Revenue Sharing data. |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | | 10% local match | 10% local match | 20% local match | |
|  |
|  |

*Table 2: Budget Worksheet*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget Worksheet** | | | |
| **Project Task** | **Funds Requested** | **Other Funds**  **(match, rebates, etc.)** | **Total Project Budget** |
| Task 1 |  |  |  |
| Task 2 |  |  |  |
| Task 3 |  |  |  |
| Task 4 |  |  |  |
| (add additional tasks as needed) |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |

**IMPORTANT**: The applicant’s budget narrative and budget worksheet must include any

applicable incentives or rebates (for example, from Efficiency Maine) at the time of application, including for electric vehicles and charging equipment, heat pumps and VRF systems, LED lighting, and water heaters.

**Direct Pay Clean Energy Projects Tax Credit Opportunity:** Tax-exempt local governments are now eligible for federal tax credits up to 30% of the project cost to build qualifying clean energy projects including solar, wind, and battery storage projects; installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and purchasing electric vehicles for town or city vehicle fleets. Program information, including eligible projects and requirements can be found on the [Direct Pay Through the Inflation Reduction Action](https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/directpay/#loca) webpage and the IRS [Elective Pay and Transferability](https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/elective-pay-and-transferability) webpage.  Additional guidance can be found on the [Clean Energy Tax Navigator webpage](https://cleanenergytaxnavigator.org/).

1. **Appendix**

The appendix may include:

* Letters of support from project partners, municipal and county officials, local civic leaders, state legislators, or partner communities
  + If this is a collaborative application from multiple communities, all participating communities must include a letter of support.
* Pertinent maps, imagery or other essential (brief) supporting documents
* Vendor or consultant estimates for project costs.
  1. **Selection and Award Process**

An evaluation team will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | **Points Available** |
| **Criteria 1: General Information and Eligibility** | Pass/Fail |
| **Criteria 2: Previous Community Action Grant status** | Pass/Fail |
| **Criteria 3: Community Characteristics**   * 5 points for a small (population less than 4,000) community or high social vulnerability. * 3 points for a medium-size (population between 4,000 and 10,000) community or medium social vulnerability. * In a multi-community application, one qualifying community may earn points for the whole application | Up to 5 points |
| **Criteria 4: Maine Won’t Wait Strategy and Action(s)** | 15 points total |
| **Criteria 5: Scope of Work** | 60 points total:   * Project Description, Timeline, Need, Outcomes, and Management for the Project (40 points) * Approach to Community Engagement and Consideration of Equity (20 points) |
| **Criteria 6: Budget Proposal** | 25 points total |
| **Total Points** | **105 points** |

For applications that demonstrate meeting the eligibility requirements in Criteria 1, the evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score the remaining Criteria sections shown above.

**2.7 Proposal Deadline and Submission**

1. **Application Submission:**

Proposals are due by the time and date listed on page 1. Email submittals are required. Please plan ahead; CRP assumes no responsibility for delays caused by internet outages or attachment sizes.

Email submittals should be sent to ashley.krulik@maine.gov with “**CAG2024-5 [Community/Organization Name]**’ in the subject line. Applications must be submitted in a single PDF file, including all appendices. The maximum attachment size is 20MB.

Emails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted, nor will encrypted emails which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system. Please check with your organization’s Information Technology team to ensure that your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.

1. **Submitting Questions about the Program Statement**

Questions about this program statement and the application process may be directed to [ashley.krulik@maine.gov](mailto:ashley.krulik@maine.gov). Include the subject line “**CAG2024-5– Questions**”

Responses provided by program staff should be considered advisory and are not a guarantee of a successful application.

Any responses deemed substantive and binding will be summarized and posted on the [Community Resilience Partnership website](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership) on a rolling basis until December 6, 2024. It is the applicant’s responsibility to consult this summary.

1. **Informational Meeting**

GOPIF will host a virtual Informational Meeting concerning the Program Statement. See the Program Statement cover page for the date, time, and web link for the meeting.

The purpose of the Informational Meeting is to answer and/or field questions, clarify aspects of the Program Statement requirements, and provide supplemental information to assist potential Applicants in applying. Although attendance at the Informational Meeting is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that interested Applicants attend.

The meeting will be recorded and posted to the [Community Resilience Partnership website](https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership).

**SECTION 3. TERMS & CONDITIONS OF GRANT AWARDS**

**3.1 Grant Agreement**

Grant recipients must enter into a written agreement with the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

**3.2 Pre-Award Costs**

The Community Resilience Partnership is not liable for any cost incurred by the Grantee or any Grantee subcontractor(s) prior to the effective date in the agreement. The Community Resilience Partnership will not authorize any payments for work completed prior to the effective date of a fully executed agreement.

**3.3 Reporting Requirements**

Quarterly progress reports and a final report are required. Quarterly reports are due 15 days after the close of the preceding quarter (Quarters: 1/1–3/31; 4/1–6/30; 7/1–9/30; 10/1–12/31). A final report is due 30 days after the end of the grant period.

**3.4 Public Records**

Following announcement of an award decision, scoring and review notes for all submissions will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) (1 M.R.S. § 401 et seq.).

**Community Resilience Partnership**

**Community Action Grant**

**CAG2024-5**

**Application Form**

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Applicants must use the embedded application document to complete their application. The application document can be accessed by double clicking on the icon above.

**APPENDIX**

**Eligible Activity Special Instructions**

* Purchase of electric vehicles (Action A1): A maximum of $7,500 of a Community Action Grant may be applied to the purchase of an electric vehicle for municipal or tribal fleets. Eligible vehicles include light-duty, medium-duty, and heavy-duty on-road electric vehicles as well as electric riding mowers and electric outboard engines that are part of a municipal fleet, all subject to the maximum award amount. Where applicable, Efficiency Maine’s electric vehicle rebate must be included in the applicant’s project budget.
* Energy efficiency projects (Actions B1-B5): Energy efficiency projects such as heat pumps, VRF systems, LED lighting upgrades, water heaters, etc. must be eligible for Efficiency Maine’s incentives. The applicant’s project budget must include applicable Efficiency Maine rebates or incentives.
  + The energy efficiency project must be located in a municipally, tribally, or publicly owned building.
* Solar Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) (Action C7): Grant funds may be used to enter a PPA to install a new renewable energy project. Proposals to “buy out” an existing PPA are less likely to receive an award.
* Resilience planning as part of comprehensive plan development (Action F1): Grant funds may be used to support specific resilience planning activities that will be integrated into municipal Comprehensive Plans, such as the consideration of policies, regulations, and practices that align with the goals and strategies of Maine Won’t Wait. Proposals to fund full comprehensive plan updates are less likely to be successful unless the proposal clearly describes the goals and specifically how resiliency will be systematically incorporated throughout the plan.
* Bulk purchasing (Action H7): Grant funds may not be used to purchase or subsidize equipment or services for residential or commercial properties.