



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

MAY 19 2023

Dear Tribal Leader:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) seeks your input regarding Section 80003, Tribal Electrification Program, of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) with respect to Tribal Electrification on Indian land. President Biden signed the IRA on August 16, 2022, which provides for transformational investments to address the climate crisis, lowers costs for working families, and creates good-paying jobs. Together with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, these two initiatives represent the largest investments in climate resilience in the Nation's history and provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the work of the Department. The IRA provides funding to support the Indian Affairs' Tribal Electrification Program, which will serve as the Department's vehicle to make available to Tribes up to \$145,500,000 in Federal funding for the purpose of implementing zero emission electrification in Tribal homes.

Tribal Electrification Program

The Tribal Electrification Program will coordinate financial and technical assistance to Tribes to increase the number of Tribal homes with zero emission electricity. The need across Indian country is significant. The Energy Information Administration estimates 14 percent of households on Native American reservations have no access to electricity, 10 times higher than the national average. Recognizing each Tribe has its own energy and electrification related needs and implementation capacity, the program will aim to meet the unique needs of individual Tribal communities.

The Department is working with multiple Federal agencies to ensure Tribes will be able to access all available Federal resources. The Department will provide technical assistance to individual Tribes, as requested, to support their applications and throughout implementation for those that are awarded funding. The IRA provides funding for three categories:

- (1) The provision of electricity to unelectrified Tribal homes through zero-emissions energy systems;
- (2) Transitioning electrified Tribal homes to zero-emission energy systems; and
- (3) The associated home repairs and retrofitting necessary to install the zero-emissions systems authorized under (1) and (2).

Funding is available to American Indian/Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal organizations, with no cost-sharing or matching requirements. Funds will be awarded under P.L. 93-638 contracts or Self-Governance compacts and may be used as match for additional project funding.

Three categories of Tribal participants have been established. The categories are based on Tribal capability to implement. Each category shall receive no less than 15 percent of the total funding available. Category descriptions are as follows:

- Initial pilot sites for Tribes who are ready to implement may include this criteria:
 - Low levels of households with electrification;
 - Community-readiness, existing plans, or designs; and
 - Potential to yield lessons-learned for other Tribes facing similar issues.

- Tribes with potential to implement community scale projects:
 - Low levels of households with electricity;
 - Low levels of households with zero emissions electricity;
 - Community is at high level of risk from climate change or actively planning community driven relocation; and
 - Higher levels of poverty.
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Consultation Questions

The Department seeks to consult with Tribal governments impacted by the presence of a high volume of unelectrified Tribal homes or those transitioning to zero-emission energy systems. The Department’s goal is to receive input from Tribes on key issues for inclusion in the Department’s Tribal electrification award process so the Tribes’ needs can be most effectively met, and the maximum number of Tribal homes are provided zero emission electricity. To facilitate the discussion during the listening session(s), participants are requested to consider and be prepared to discuss the following topics:

- Information related to the electrification project readiness in your community, including potential workforce opportunities and challenges, or potential to serve as a pilot project; and
- Whether your Tribe has the capacity to apply for and manage large funding awards for electrification, and the need for technical assistance.

The Department will conduct the webinar listening sessions listed below and will accept oral and written comments. Please register in advance for any listening session you plan on attending. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please note these Tribal listening sessions will be closed to the press and the public to protect confidential information that may be discussed during the sessions.

The listening session schedule is:

Date	Time	Location
May 25, 2023	3:00-5:00 ET	Virtual Register in advance for this meeting: https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSdOugqjsrGH93iYh8_QCNdZn7_GnQFXc

May 26, 2023	2:00-4:00 ET	Virtual Register in advance for this meeting: https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsd-2qqz8qEsDbITy73Tg8oUy0c_GjV9w
May 31, 2023	3:00-5:00 ET	Virtual Register in advance for this meeting: https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItcO-tqzwuGGBB0y1Ac8uo1wowF8xiPEk

You may provide written input by Thursday, June 15, 2023, to ECRP@ios.goi.gov. I look forward to speaking with you. If you have questions regarding this effort, please contact the Office of Indian Economic Development Director, Onna LeBeau, at onna.lebeau@bia.gov.

Sincerely,



Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs