



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

For

Ava Community Energy Authority

**Community Organizing and Capacity Building
for Resilience Hubs
Community Innovation Grant**

RESPONSE DUE

by

6:00pm PT

on

Friday, August 30, 2024

Issue date: July 19, 2024

For complete information regarding this project, see RFP posted at avaenergy.org/solicitations or contact the Ava representative listed below. Thank you for your interest!

Heidy Zohar Ramirez | Reporting Analyst
(510) 973 9098
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**AVA COMMUNITY ENERGY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
SPECIFICATIONS, TERMS & CONDITIONS**

**Community Organizing and Capacity Building for Resilience Hubs
Community Innovation Grant**

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STATEMENT OF WORK

The Community Organizing and Capacity Building for Resilience Hubs Grant is part of Ava Community Energy's (Ava) Community Innovation Grantmaking and Solar and Storage initiatives, which are collectively intended to enhance local energy resilience, sustainability, and preparedness. The objective of this grant is to identify and develop a catalog of potential resilience hub sites through community outreach and organizing, educational efforts, collaborative learning, and research related to energy resilience. The selected grant recipient(s) will be responsible for working with local communities to identify 90-100 viable community owned locations or "sites".

As a public power agency supplying affordable renewable energy to customers, Ava's role in supporting resilience hubs through this grant will focus on providing support for a wide range of community sites to conceptualize their resilience needs and understand which of those needs can be supported through the provision of energy resilience.

Community sites identified through this grant, with energy resilience needs as a part of their Resilience Hub concept, will be eligible to receive technical assistance from the Resilience Hub Technical Assistance Program in support of further defining and procuring solar and storage for energy resilience projects. Furthermore, community sites will be eligible for additional incentives to purchase and install solar and storage through the upcoming Solar and Storage Incentive Program, separately administered Ava programs.

Ava is seeking proposals for a Community Organizing and Capacity Building for Resilience Hubs Community Innovation Grant. The qualified team(s) or organization(s) will be responsible for:

1. Conducting resilience hub community research to develop examples of successful resilience hub case studies, including community engagement, ownership models, and funding sources.
2. Working with Ava to confirm the definition of resilience hubs through a community engagement process.
3. Identifying potential resilience hub sites
 - a. Organizing public engagement for potential sites to gauge interest and define community needs.
 - b. Develop needs assessments through public engagement.
 - c. Assisting community groups to develop a draft resilience hub concept plan
 - d. Working with community groups interested in developing resilience hubs to apply for the Resilience Hub Technical Assistance Program and/or the Solar and Storage Incentive Program as needed to facilitate the successful development and operation of resilience hubs.
4. Regular reporting to Ava on pipeline of sites, applications, and perceived benefits and barriers to resilience hub development

This grant should encourage collaboration, innovation, and the integration of sustainable practices to enhance the overall energy resilience of the community. Proposals from partnerships between organizations are encouraged and will also be considered.

The selected recipient(s) will be awarded a grant of up to \$300,000 over three years. Grant funds may be used for the purposes of, yet not limited to, meeting grant goals and outcomes outlined in Section 3.

1. BACKGROUND

Ava Community Energy Background

Ava Community Energy (Ava), formerly East Bay Community Energy (EBCE), is a non-profit public power agency serving over 1.7 million residents and businesses in Alameda County and parts of the San Joaquin Valley. Launched in June 2018, it aims to provide renewable energy at competitive rates while reinvesting earnings into local green jobs, programs, and clean energy projects. As one of California's 24 community choice aggregation (CCA) programs, Ava is accelerating climate action goals by offering clean power from wind, solar, and hydropower, aiming for 100% carbon-free electricity by 2030. Ava also supports programs for energy-efficient appliances, electric vehicle adoption, and battery storage. For more information about Ava Community Energy, please visit <https://avaenergy.org/>.

Formed by local governments (i.e. cities, towns, and counties) as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), CCAs are governed by locally elected public officials and have a unique relationship with our customers. CCAs have contact information for our customers and develop unique customer programs that help meet community and environmental goals.

Ava Community Energy serves as provider of electric generation service to a culturally rich and diverse population in Alameda County and the City of Tracy. The cities of Stockton and Lathrop will begin taking electricity service from Ava in 2025. To understand and effectively prepare for the evolving clean energy sector, as well as adequately deliver on the proposed outcomes for the grant, it is important to understand Ava's service population:

Alameda County	San Joaquin County
33% of Alameda County residents are foreign born. 46% of households, of the county's total population, reported speaking a language other than English at home. ¹	23% of San Joaquin County residents are foreign born. 41% of households, of the county's total population, reported speaking a language other than English at home. ¹
Population Demographics ² : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian (non-Hispanic) 31% • White (non-Hispanic) 31% • Hispanic 22% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Hispanic 11%, • White Hispanic 7%, • Multiracial Hispanic 3% • Black/African American (non-Hispanic) 10% • Multiracial (non-Hispanic) 5% • Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander(non-Hispanic) 0.8% • Other (non-Hispanic) 0.4% • American Indian/Alaska Native (non-Hispanic) 0.3% 	Population Demographics ² : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic 42% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Hispanic 21%, • Other Hispanic 10%, • Multiracial Hispanic 10% • White (non-Hispanic) 31% • Asian (non-Hispanic) 16% • Black/African American (non-Hispanic) 7% • Multiracial (non-Hispanic) 4% • Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander(non-Hispanic) 0.6% • Other (non-Hispanic) 0.3% • American Indian/Alaska Native (non-Hispanic) 0.2%

Of Ava's total customer base, about 20% of residential customers are on [CARE](#), California Alternate Rates for Energy rates, representing a total 2020 usage of 524 MWh. Low-income customers that are enrolled in the CARE program receive a 30-35 percent discount on their electric bill and a 20 percent discount on their natural gas bill.³

Table 1: Ava service area social demographics

Resilience Hub Background

According to the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, resilience hubs are “physical, community-serving facilities that support residents, distribute needed resources, reduce carbon pollution, and enhance quality of life”. Locations that provide resilience hubs should prioritize communities that are on the front lines of climate change, such as low-income, communities of color, immigrants, the elderly, rural and remote communities, and tribal communities, as well as communities that may have strained relations with government or emergency services. Resilience hubs should equip trusted community partners, such as community-based organizations (CBOs), to serve as a bridge of support during times of disruption or disaster.

Grant Background

The purpose of this solicitation is to engage 2-3 community-focused organizations or consultants who can each identify up to 90-100 partner organizations across Ava's service area that can further hone strong community relationships, and work with potential resilience hub sites to develop a concept plan for serving as resilience hub sites.

1. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/alamedacountycalifornia/PST045223>
 2. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/>
 3. <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/electrical-energy/electric-costs/care-fera-program>

2. TERM OF GRANT

Recipient(s) will be selected to receive a grant of up to \$300,000 over three years. Ava reserves the right to extend the agreement(s) for additional years. Grant funds may be used for the purposes of, yet not limited to, meeting grant goals and outcomes outlined in Section 3. Proposals should clearly outline in the proposed budget how the funds will be utilized (including direct and indirect costs), ensuring cost-effectiveness and maximum impact on the community.

Proposed Grant Payment Schedule:

Date	Disbursement Amount
October 2024 (upon Grant Agreement execution)	Up to \$100,000.00
October 2025	Up to \$100,000.00
October 2026	Up to \$100,000.00
Total Amount to be Awarded:	Up to \$300,000.00

Table 2: Proposed Payment Schedule

3. STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

Interested organizations should submit their proposals by 6:00PM Friday, August 30, 2024. Proposals must include a detailed project plan, budget, organizational qualifications, and relevant experience. The successful proposal submittal(s) must demonstrate that the organization or team has the appropriate professional and technical background, community familiarity, and access to adequate personnel and experience to fulfill the stated scope of work. Priority will be given to organizations operating within Ava's service area.

3.1. Community Research, Resilience Hub Definition and Resilience Hub Case Studies:

- Organize at least 3 educational community meetings to refine and confirm an initial working definition that will be delivered for the start of the grant. These focus groups, community meetings, will occur within 2 months of grant project commencement.
- Conduct in-depth research and produce an integrated, public-facing document on existing and proposed resilience hub models, including definition of services provided and their role in supporting community energy resilience.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current resilience hubs, highlighting successes and areas for improvement.
- Identify potential risks and mitigation strategies related to community engagement, funding, and operating of resilience hub.
-

3.2. Community Engagement to Develop Resilience Hubs

- Develop and implement a public engagement strategy to establish community interest in potential community energy resilience hubs and preferred community services.
- Conduct surveys, town halls, or similar forums to understand local community needs for resilience hubs and potential locations.
- Conduct a minimum of 4 public workshops per year during the 3-year grant term to distribute knowledge regarding resilience hub site requirements, needs assessments, and toolkits at public engagement workshops or community listening sessions to facilitate applications to the Resilience Hub Technical Assistance and Solar and Storage Incentive Programs.
- Work with Ava and Ava's selected technical assistance program implementor to develop a resilience hub screening Form that can serve as an application to receive Resilience Hub Technical Assistance
- Provide 90-100 potential sites that meet the criteria for resilience hubs (defined in section 3.1 above) across Ava's service area that are eligible for either Resilience Hub Technical Assistance Program and/or the Solar and Storage Incentive Program.

3.3. Resilience Hub Development Reporting and Improvement

- Provide timely updates on focus group outcomes and quarterly reporting on resilience hub community engagement activities.
- Collaborate with Ava and Ava's selected resilience hub technical assistance provider to continually improve on the application process and Resilience Hub Technical Assistance Program.

Assumptions

Ava may provide the following to grant recipient(s) for the development or benefit of grant deliverables:

- Marketing support for outreach and Ava branded promotional materials.
- Notifying Ava customers within a desired localized geographic area to respond to surveys and meeting invitations.

4. QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum Qualifications

Ava Community Energy welcomes proposals from organizations that demonstrate a commitment to empowering communities in Ava Community Energy's service territories, the clean energy sector, and contributing to the broader goals of the energy transition within Ava's service area. Applicants may include community, charitable, and civic organizations, health and social service agencies, membership associations, social clubs, and educational institutions, faith institutions and other entities. Priority will be given to

organizations operating within Ava’s service area. Organizations are required to provide tax filing status documents along with their proposal.

- If applying as a nonprofit, please provide an IRS determination letter for your organization or fiscal sponsor.
- If working with a fiscal sponsor, please provide the fiscal sponsor’s letter of support, acknowledging responsibility for fiscal administration.

5. GRANT AGREEMENT

Ava Community Energy intends to award up to three Grant Agreements based upon the scoring criteria provided in Table 4 below.

6. SCHEDULE

Date	Activity
July 19, 2024	Issuance of RFP Request for Applications issued and posted to Ava website.
August 1, 2024	Informational Webinar Q&A
August 16, 2024	Deadline for Questions/clarifications
August 30, 2024	Proposal Submission Deadline Applications are due by 6PM PDT on Friday, August 30, 2024. Submit applications to hramirez@avanergy.org
September 4-18, 2024	Interviews and Finalist Selection Ava will schedule interviews with selected parties.
September 20, 2024	Proposal Evaluation Completed
September 2024	Award Notification Ava will notify the selected grantee(s) of award
October 2024	Grant Agreement Execution Ava receives approval to execute Grant Agreement with grantee at Board of Directors meeting.
November 2024	Grant Initiation

Table 3: Grant Schedule

PROCEDURES, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS

GENERAL

Form of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted electronically by e-mail to hramirez@avaenergy.org.

Late Responses

To be considered, proposals must be received electronically by email by 6:00 p.m. PT on Friday, August 30, 2024. No late responses will be considered.

1. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/alamedacountycalifornia/PST045223>
2. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/>
3. <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/electrical-energy/electric-costs/care-fera-program>

California Public Records Act (CPRA)

All proposals become the property of Ava, which is a public agency subject to the disclosure requirements of the California Public Records Act (“CPRA”). If Applicant(s) proprietary information is contained in documents submitted to Ava, and Applicant(s) claims that such information falls within one or more CPRA exemptions, Applicant(s) must clearly mark such information “CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY,” and identify the specific lines containing the information. In the event of a request for such information, Ava will make best efforts to provide notice to Applicant(s) prior to such disclosure. If Applicant(s) contends that any documents are exempt from the California Public Records Act (CPRA) and wishes to prevent disclosure, it is required to obtain a protective order, injunctive relief, or other appropriate remedy from a court of law in Alameda County, before Ava’s deadline for responding to the CPRA request. If Applicant(s) fails to obtain such remedy within Ava’s deadline for responding to the CPRA request, Ava may disclose the requested information.

Applicant(s) further agrees that it shall defend, indemnify, and hold Ava or its agents, harmless against any claim, action, or litigation (including, but not limited to, all judgments, costs, fees, and attorney’s fees) that may result from Ava’s assertion of an exemption or privilege as a basis for withholding any information marked confidential by the Applicant(s). DO NOT MARK YOUR ENTIRE PROPOSAL CONFIDENTIAL. ONLY MARK THOSE PAGES THAT YOU BELIEVE CONTAIN PROPRIETARY INFORMATION.

Confidentiality

All data and information obtained from or on behalf of Ava by the Applicant(s) and its agents in this RFP process, including reports, recommendations, specifications, and data, shall be treated by the Applicant(s) and its agents as confidential. The Applicant(s) and its agents shall not disclose or communicate this information to a third party or use it in advertising, publicity, propaganda, or in another job or jobs, unless written consent is obtained from Ava.

Generally, each proposal and all documentation, including financial information, submitted by an Applicant(s) to Ava is confidential until a Grant Agreement is awarded, when such documents become public record under State and local law, unless exempted under CPRA.

Electronic Mail Address

Most of the communication regarding this procurement will be conducted by electronic mail (e-mail). Potential Applicants agree to provide the Contact with a valid e-mail address to receive this communication.

Ava Rights

Ava and its Contact reserve the right to do any of the following at any time:

- a. Reject any or all proposal(s), without indicating any reason for such rejection;

- b. Waive or correct any minor or inadvertent defect, irregularity, or technical error in a proposal or the RFP process, or as part of any subsequent grant agreement negotiation;
- c. Request that Applicants supplement or modify all or certain aspects of their proposals or other documents or materials submitted;
- d. Terminate the RFP, and at its option, issue a new RFP;
- e. Procure any equipment or services specified in this RFP by other means;
- f. Modify the selection process, the specifications or requirements for materials or services, or the contents or format of the proposals;
- g. Extend a deadline specified in this RFP, including deadlines for accepting proposals;
- h. Negotiate with any or none of the Applicants;
- i. Modify in the final agreement any terms and/or conditions described in this RFP;
- j. Terminate failed negotiations with any Applicant(s) without liability, and negotiate with other Applicant(s);
- k. Disqualify any Applicant(s) on the basis of a real or apparent conflict of interest, or evidence of collusion that is disclosed by the proposal or other data available to Ava;
- l. Eliminate, reject, or disqualify a proposal of any Applicant(s) who is not a responsible Applicant(s) or fails to submit a responsive offer as determined solely by A or its representative; or
- m. Accept all or a portion of an Applicant(s)'s proposal.

Supplier Diversity

Pursuant to California Senate Bill 255, Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) are required to report to the California Public Utilities Commission on their diverse suppliers, as defined by CPUC General Order 156. Consistent with the California Public Utilities Code and California Public Utilities Commission policy objectives, Applicants that execute a Grant Agreement with Ava will be required to complete a Supplier Diversity Questionnaire. Ava will not consider race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in procurement decisions; providing such information will not impact the selection process or good standing of executed Grant Agreements.

Ava encourages all eligible parties to get certified with the CPUC as a women, minority, disabled veteran and/or LGBT owned business enterprise (WMDVLGBTBE).

For overview information on the CPUC Supplier Diversity Program, please visit the program homepage (<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/supplierdiversity/>). For information on the certification process and requirements, please visit the Certifications page (<https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Certifications/>).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluations will be based upon the information provided in the proposals and such other information requested by Ava, or as deemed appropriate by Ava. Proposals must provide clear, concise information and sufficient detail to enable reviewers/evaluators to evaluate

the responsiveness and quality of the proposals to all RFP requirements. Proposals that fail to meet RFP requirements could be rejected. The Contact or Ava may waive minor irregularities in proposals if doing so would be in the best interest of Ava. Evaluators may recommend discontinuing evaluation of any proposal that is considered not in compliance with the RFP requirements.

The review/evaluation team will select the proposal that offers the greatest value to Ava based on an analysis of the following criteria:

Technical Evaluation Criteria	Weight
<p>Quality of Proposed Plan: Meeting Grant Program Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality for proposal to achieve goals, requirements, and deliverables. Detailed description of proposed energy resilience hub models and concepts. Plan for community involvement, awareness-building, and site identification. Plans for community-ownership revenue model 	35%
<p>Organizational Capacity: Budget & History of Meeting Grant Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed grant budget and workplan are reasonable and sufficient to achieve proposed outcomes. Budget considerations for equipment, events, or grant deliverables are justified, demonstrating cost-effectiveness. List of all FTE existing and/or proposed additional staff. Experience in developing and implementing similar programs. 	20%
<p>Demonstrated Capacity of Delivering: Local Community Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes demonstrated experience and impact conducting outreach in Ava’s service territory. Demonstrated ability to engage community and local business or other organizations effectively. 	20%
<p>Prioritizing Equity Priority Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preference for outreach plans focused on historically marginalized populations or geographic regions. Preference for reaching low to medium income households. 	12.5%
<p>Ava Energy Special Procurement Preferences The following four categories will receive extra points in Ava’s evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization sited within Ava service territory or employing at least 25% of the workforce residing in <u>Ava’s territory (5%)</u> Organizations sited within CalEnviroScreen 4.0 <u>Disadvantaged Community (2.5%)</u> Organizations employing <u>Union Labor (2.5%)</u> Disabled-Veteran Owned Business (2.5%) 	12.5%

Table 4: Grant Scoring Criteria

1. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/alamedacountycalifornia/PST045223>
 2. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/>
 3. <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/electrical-energy/electric-costs/care-fera-program>

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

AVA CONTACT

The evaluation phase of the competitive process will begin upon receipt of proposals until a Grant Agreement has been awarded. Applicants must not have any contact with Ava personnel, nor should they lobby evaluators or any member of the staff or Board of Directors during the evaluation process. Any communications outside of the procedures set forth in this RFP may result in disqualification of applicant.

All questions regarding these specifications, terms and conditions are to be submitted in writing, via e-mail, by 6:00 p.m. PST on Friday, August 30, 2024, to:

Attn: Heidy Zohar Ramirez, Programs Reporting Analyst
Ava Community Energy
E-Mail: hramirez@avaenergy.org

The Ava website will be the official notification posting place of all Requests for Interest, Proposals, Quotes and Addenda.

Go to <http://www.avaenergy.org/solicitations> to view current opportunities.

SUBMITTAL OF PROPOSALS

All proposals must be received at Ava Community Energy by 6:00 p.m. on Friday, August 30, 2024. Proposals will be received only at the addresses shown below any proposals received after that time and date or at a place other than the stated address will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant unopened. Electronic proposals must be submitted in a non-alterable format such as a .pdf.

1. Applicants must submit an electronic copy of their proposal via email to the following:
 - a. Heidy Zohar Ramirez, Reporting Analyst – Ava:
hramirez@avaenergy.org
2. Applicants are responsible for all of their costs required for the preparation and submission of a grant proposal.

RESPONSE FORMAT

1. Proposal responses are to be straightforward, clear, concise and specific to the information requested.
2. **Objections for the form of Grant Agreement:** Applicants must provide any and all specific objections to the Grant Agreement in order for any changes to be considered. Stating an objection does not guarantee that Ava will accept such changes.

Attachment A Required Response Information

All of the specific documentation listed below is required to be submitted in order for a proposal to be deemed complete. Applicants shall submit all documentation, in the order listed below and clearly label each section with the appropriate title (i.e. Table of Contents, Letter of Transmittal, Key Personnel, etc.). Please provide the following:

- 1. **Table of Contents:** Responses shall include a table of contents listing the individual sections of the proposal/quotation and their corresponding page numbers. Tabs separating each of the individual sections.

- 2. **Letter of Transmittal:** Proposals shall include a description of Applicant's capabilities and approach in providing its services to the Ava and provide a brief synopsis of the highlights of the Proposal and overall benefits of the Proposal to the Ava. This synopsis should not exceed one page in length and should be easily understood.

- 3. **Organizational Description and Qualifications:**
 - a. Applicants general size, resources, and organizational structure with respect to the proposal.
 - b. **Key Personnel:** Proposal responses shall identify the lead contact and include a complete list of all key personnel associated with the RFP. This list must include all key personnel, and a description of their qualifications, who will provide services/training to Ava staff and all key personnel who will provide maintenance and support services. For each person on the list, the following information shall be included:
 - i. The person's relationship with Applicant, including job title and years of employment with Applicant;
 - ii. The role that the person will play in connection with the RFP;
 - iii. Address, telephone, fax numbers, and e-mail address;
 - iv. Person's educational background; and
 - v. Person's relevant experience, certifications, and/or merits
 - c. Listing of three (3) similar engagements with reference information.
 - d. Four (4) page maximum.

- 4. **Description of the Approach and Work Plan:**

Please include plan for items listed in Section 3 – Statement of Requirements, a detailed description of the project and:

 - a. Proposed resilience hub research and community engagement activities.
 - b. Plans for public engagement and education
 - c. Proposed resilience hub screening form
 - d. Plan for compiling list of viable sites
 - a. Community relationships (if applicable) to support this work
 - e. General description of staff, costs, and relevant budget considerations
 - f. Four (4) page maximum. Four (4) page maximum.

- 5. **Schedule with Key Milestones or Benchmarks**
Along with required levels of Ava staff time requested (if any).
 - a. One (1) page maximum.

- 6. **Grant Funding:** Please describe how grant dollars will be spent during the term of the Grant along with a list of existing funders (if any).
 - a. Staff salaries
 - b. Administrative fees
 - c. Direct and indirect costs, reimbursable expenses if any
 - d. Costs for grant implementation and operations
 - e. List of top three largest, or current, funders and funding amounts
 - f. Three (3) page max

- 7. **References:**
 - a. Please include up to three references for similar scope of work to this grant.
 - b. Include name and contact number for Ava to follow up with.

- 8. **Ava Local Procurement Preferences:**
 - a. Does your organization have an office located in Ava's service territory or does at least 25% of your workforce reside in Ava's service territory?
 - b. Is the office where work will primarily be conducted on behalf of Ava for these services be located in a Disadvantaged Community as identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency's CalEnviroScreen Tool?
 - c. Will your organization use union labor or union contractors for these services if selected?
 - d. Is your organization registered as a Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise with the California Department of General Services?