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Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund (TSAF) Gap Funding Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)

GRID Alternatives' Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund aims to catalyze the growth of solar energy and expand solar job opportunities in tribal communities across the United States.

TSAF Background

GRID Alternatives' and the National Tribal Program has worked since 2010 to help tribal communities across the United States achieve their renewable energy goals. In 2018, the TSAF was developed to provide tribes with access to philanthropic capital through a competitive grant program. As a tribal-led program we partner with tribes and tribal individuals to support renewable energy and job training opportunities. TSAF grants clearly focus on building renewable energy infrastructure and are feasible, cost-effective, and engage broad tribal community participation. Energy leadership, educational scholarships, workforce development, and training are also at the forefront of TSAF-funded projects and programs to ensure that tribal members from the communities we partner with have equitable access to career pathways and the economic benefits of renewable energy.

The TSAF, GRID, and the National Tribal Program work in alignment to identify, develop, finance and implement solar power projects that meet



community needs, including education, hands-on training, and energy cost reductions for tribal members.

TSAF Grant Priorities

- The TSAF will provide necessary capital to support the development of new solar demonstration projects in tribal communities around Indian Country
- The TSAF supports and encourages solar education, training, and workforce development in tribal communities
- The TSAF prioritizes the development of long-term energy plans to increase tribal energy security and resiliency.

The TSAF in collaboration with tribes and tribal leaders aims to address challenges and opportunities related to energy sovereignty, climate resilience and resource sustainability.

The TSAF is excited to share our mission, vision, and goals through grantmaking with tribal communities across Indian Country by engagement and communication, advocacy, technical assistance, collaboration, and a commitment to build capacity in tribal energy sovereignty.

TSAF Funding Areas

Solar Project “Gap” Funding Solar projects of any type that require a tribal cost-share (ex. Federal or State grant programs) or are leveraging funding from other grant opportunities or initiatives are encouraged to apply for up to \$250,000.

Gap Funding Priorities:

- These projects should be positioned to deploy solar energy with an existing funding gap (cost share) which is preventing the project from being completed.

Gap Funding Objectives:

- To enhance and strengthen tribal solar energy development and infrastructure inclusive of other impactful renewable energy technologies (battery storage, clean mobility/charging stations etc).

- To provide funding toward larger scale solar projects that benefit a significant number of tribal community members.
- To initiate new solar demonstration project systems that will strengthen tribal community energy resilience.

TSAF Grant timeline and reporting

RFP – INVITE TO APPLY NOTIFICATION	August 1, 2022
GRANT APPLICATION DUE	September 15, 2022 by 5:00 p.m. MST
GRANT AWARD/DENIAL NOTIFICATIONS	By September 30, 2022
GRANT TIMELINE (PROJECT FISCAL YEAR START/END)	October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023
GRANTEE CHECK-INS WITH TSAF STAFF	October 2022, January 2023, April 2023, July 2023
GRANTEE FINAL REPORT DUE	October 31, 2023

TSAF review and selection criteria

Upon receipt of a TSAF application, the following funding criteria should be met:

- Solid and concrete matches between project purpose and funding priority area
- Clear focus on building renewable energy infrastructure in the tribal community
- Demonstrated ability and/or experience necessary for a successful project
- Clear plan of action, including specific goals and measurable objectives
- Feasible, cost-effective, and sustainable budget
- Partnerships that engage broad tribal community participation and support
- Potential for application and replication in other tribal communities

The TSAF will provide a knowledgeable, experienced and strategic review, scoring, and selection of TSAF grant applications.



TSAF Eligibility

The TSAF is committed to serving, supporting, and strengthening American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribal communities by investing in solar energy development and sustainability.

The TSAF eligibility criteria is as follows:

- Federally recognized tribal governments in the lower 48 states and Alaska (tribal government programs, such as tribal housing authority, cultural departments, economic development entities, etc.)
- Tribally-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations (fiscally-sponsored tribal community organizations, tribal community organizations without a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status may submit an application through a sponsoring organization if the sponsor has IRS 501(c)(3) status and can provide written authorization confirming its willingness to act as the fiscal sponsor.
- Schools that are tribally-controlled 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and schools that are tribally-operated such as tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), any public or Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools.
- The definition of “tribal-led” is: an organization in which a majority (>51%) of the board of directors and leadership team are American Indian or Alaska Native. Organizations that are not tribal-led are not eligible to apply (with or without a fiscal sponsor).
- The community served for your project must be designated low-to-moderate income (LMI) as demonstrated by eligibility for federal, state, or tribal low-income programs, or with Census data.

TSAF Application Site and Submission Guidelines

The TSAF application must conform to the following requirements:

- All applicants will need to secure a tribal resolution or a letter of support from your tribal council or board of directors acknowledging the application for the proposed project. We understand this may not be possible to submit at the time of application, please upload/provide a placeholder letter and state when the signed letter will be submitted.



TSAF Applications are due September 15, 2022 by 5:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (MST), 4:00 p.m. PST, 6:00 p.m. CST, 7:00 p.m. EST.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their online applications at least 24 hours in advance of the submission deadline. If your tribe/organization prefers to submit via microsoft word document, please contact the TSAF directly at grants@tribalsolar.org to discuss this process.

Applicants may revise or update their application until the expiration of the application submission deadline.

All applications that pass eligibility and initial review will undergo a comprehensive review and will be scored according to the 7 criteria identified in the RFP.

PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY

Considerations for Communications and Receipt of Funding

Participation in communications activities that acknowledge the support of TSAF funders, including Bezos Earth Fund, is a requirement of grants through the Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund.

All applicants will need to secure a tribal resolution or a letter of support from your tribal council acknowledging the application for the proposed project and that Bezos Earth Fund is the source of funding regranted through the Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund.

GRID Alternatives and TSAF understand that tribes have different cultural values, expectations and traditions around communications, as well as ethical and moral principles when it comes to accepting financial resources. The following are GRID's commitments to and expectations of tribal partners participating in TSAF projects.

Our Commitments to You (TSAF grantee):

1. GRID Alternatives will provide you with a single point of contact for all TSAF-related communications activities.
2. GRID Alternatives will collaborate with your designated communications representative to develop a set of communications activities that is appropriate for the project and your tribe. Activities may include one or more of the following:
 - Press release announcing receipt of TSAF grant for local, regional or national audience
 - News item on GRID Alternatives' website(s), press releases, and/or newsletter about the project
 - Groundbreaking or other public event with speaking opportunities and/or branding for TSAF funders
 - Project video produced by GRID Alternatives or other approved partner
 - Listing/write-up in Bezos Earth Fund stakeholder reports
 - Listing in Bezos Earth Fund philanthropy press releases

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3. GRID Alternatives will provide you the opportunity to review and approve all external-facing communications assets and their intended use prior to their release.

Our Expectations:

1. You will provide a single point of contact for all TSAF-related communications activities who is authorized to provide and or/secure permissions on behalf of the tribe.
2. You will collaborate with us in good faith to identify appropriate communications activities to promote the project and acknowledge Bezos Earth Fund and TSAF support.
3. You will provide timely review of external-facing communications assets, and not unreasonably withhold approval.