

Illinois Climate Pollution Reduction Grants: Community Geothermal Planning

Responses to Applicant Questions

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

[IFA-CPRG-05](#)

December 22, 2025 – December 26, 2025

Question: I was on the webinar held this past Monday, which I thought was very informative. I am trying to assemble a team to submit an application for the phase 1 grant. Some of the groups we have reached out to including the [REDACTED] and our local climate action group raised the issue of the level of and details required for documentation of how the grant money is spent. They expressed that the documentation requirement can be quite a challenge, especially if federal money is involved.

Response: Yes, there will be a fair amount of reporting involved with this grant. Some of the deliverables that will be expected from this grant are listed in Attachment B. These deliverables include, but are not limited to:

- Site footprint with details of building stock.
- Pre-construction and construction budget.
- Construction timeframe.
- Mechanical and civil drawings.
- Technical engineering report.
- Permitting plan.
- Outreach and marketing pathway to gain customer commitments.
- Pro-forma financials for system ownership over a twenty year period.
- Ownership structure description.
- Estimate of customer bill savings in a typical participating residence, including the role of weatherization and other incentives.
- Plan to comply with federal requirements, including Davis Bacon and Related Acts, Build America Buy America, and other applicable construction requirements.
- Plan to engage with and employ apprentices from registered apprenticeship programs.
- The system's expected Coefficient of Performance, including blower and loop pump power.
- The number of buildings (by building type) to be connected to the system.
- The estimated square footage of the buildings (by building type) to be connected to the system.

It is expected that awardees use grant funding to pay for the creation of these deliverables. Awardees will also be required to submit semiannual performance reports that include GHG estimates for buildings, community outreach metrics, and more. You can use the application as a good measure of the work that will be required for the semiannual reporting. Grant funds can also be used to pay for staff time on reporting activities.

Grantees under this program are expected to put together a comprehensive plan that they will then use to apply for our \$1,000,000-\$5,000,000 implementation grants. So yes, there will be extensive reporting to



ensure that grantees are adequately prepared for Phase Two. The IFA team will be available to provide technical assistance and walk grantees through every step of the process.

Question: My question was less about what the documentation coming out of the Phase 1 grant and more about how we are to document or report on how we are spending the money received in the Phase 1 grant.

Response: I understand. Our reporting schedule will be semiannual performance reports and quarterly financial reports. The financial reports are not terribly difficult – grantees just need to keep track of their invoices and upload them as proof of incurred expenses. The semiannual performance reports will be more involved, but again, our team is here to help walk grantees through the process and what we expect to see in the reports. We have a dedicated grants team for this project and will be much more accessible than the larger federal organizations.

December 15, 2025 – December 19, 2025

Question: How many awards are anticipated under the Phase 1 Grants?

Response: We have funding set aside for between 4-6 grants. Funding will be competitive and amounts are determined by the applicant's ability to achieve the goals of the program over the 12-month performance period. IFA is not obligated to exhaust all available funding if it does not receive enough qualified applications.

Question: Does the project have to have residential or mixed-use buildings included? Would a complex of community college buildings be eligible?

Response: This funding is intended for the most complex projects to move forward. That typically means projects with various building owners and building types. That does not preclude a complex of community college buildings, but the application must demonstrate how it will meet all the requirements of a Phase 2 project.

Question: Is there any preference given to the types of building connected to the system. Is it preferable to have a mix of residential and non-residential buildings. Would all residential buildings be eligible?

Response: Yes, we encourage as many residential-based buildings as possible to be connected to this system. Phase 2 has a requirement of approximately 100 households within a census block to be connected to this project. This does not preclude mixed-use buildings from participating, but we want to focus on residential building types.

Question: Can you share more on what constitutes meaningful pre-development activities? Like what about renovation plans and financial planning or community engagement has taken place, but community geothermal system feasibility studies haven't been conducted yet?

Response: Renovation plans, financial planning, and community engagement would all constitute meaningful pre-development planning. Applications do not need to have conducted feasibility studies before applying. That work, along with additional financial planning and community engagement, are types of eligible activities that this grant could fund.



Question: Of those 100 residential households is there a requirement or preference for low-to-moderate income households? And if so, what is that percentage?

Response: There is not a called-out requirement, but there is a priority for focus on equity investment eligible communities (EIECs). If an application demonstrates that a project that is focused on communities located in those areas, it will be given priority in scoring, which is further detailed in the NOFO.

Question: How would apartment buildings fit into the Phase 1 program?

Response: Phase 1 is about planning for geothermal projects that connect multiple buildings, which could include apartment buildings.

Question: "Demonstrate meaningful work" - does this mean to mention the previous project done by the applicant?

Response: There is a portion of the NOFO called "Applicant Qualifications." If your organization has done other similar projects, we'll want to know that, but what we really mean is meaningful work to develop the particular geothermal project that the organization is proposing.

Question: Do school districts qualify?

Response: Yes. IFA encourages applicants to bring forth any plans that will meet the requirements of the program.

Question: Is there any teaming or partnership list to connect project owners with others?

Response: We do not currently have a teaming or partnership list available.

Question: Could you share a list of attendees on this call?

Response: A list of partners willing to collaborate was shared with attendees of the webinar afterwards. If you could like access to that list, please contact climatebank@il-fa.com.

Question: Professional services under phase 1 for energy/financial analyses and system design documents will need some assurance that they would be involved in the construction administration under phase 2. Has this been considered?

Response: That is up to the project to decide how they will finance their projects and which developers they will partner with.

Question: To be clear, do the GSHPs (ground source heat pumps) count for funding in the grant?

Response: GSHPs are an eligible technology, but the equipment itself is not an eligible expense for the planning grants.

Question: When do you anticipate awarding Phase One grants?

Response: Applications are due February 13th. We anticipate letting folks know of their scoring within 45 to 60 days following the close of the grant.



Question: Any template for the proposal? Like an MS Word file?

Response: Attachments A and B should be filled out in their respective formats, found on the Climate Bank website.

December 8, 2025 – December 12, 2025

Question: Are there any restrictions on what type(s) of entities are eligible to apply for this program, or may any entity apply (e.g., local governments, state governments, nonprofits, tribes, tribal organizations, businesses/private sector entities, schools/school districts, or colleges/universities)?

Response: No, there are no restrictions on the types of entities that may apply for this program.

Question: The notice for funding opportunity for this program states that an optional technical assistance session will be held. Are you able to provide any information on the date and time of the session, as well as the registration link or meeting link. If not, are you able to say when and where such information will be posted?

Response: Apologies that the link for the technical assistance session was not posted, it should be on our website now. It will be held on December 15th at 11 a.m. You can register here: [Community Geothermal Planning and Pilot Phase One Planning Grants](#).

Question: I have potential candidate for geothermal grant, which federal grants provide assistance to public entities?

Response: For a geothermal project, please join us on Monday, December 15, 2025, for a webinar that the IFA is putting on for geothermal planning grant that is currently open. A link to register for that webinar is [here](#). Applications are due in mid-February and they are quite involved, so we would want you to take a look at that as soon as possible.

December 1, 2025 – December 5, 2025

There were no questions submitted this week.

The last day to submit questions for IFA-CPRG-05 is February 13, 2026, at 5:00 PM CT.