



# Application Guidance

## Offshore Wind Applied Research Administration Grant

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## Introduction

The Wind Institute for Innovation and Training (Wind Institute), housed within New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA or the Authority), is developing programs and partnerships to support offshore wind (OSW) focused research and innovation that de-risks the development of the OSW industry. To achieve this, the Wind Institute is launching an OSW Applied Research Administration Grant Challenge (Grant Challenge), a competitive funding opportunity that will award a single grant to a qualified administrator (Administrator) who can independently develop and manage a Sub-Grant Program that will support OSW research and innovation at New Jersey (NJ) colleges and universities over a five-year period. This investment will leverage the deep OSW expertise and capacity for tech transfer at NJ universities and colleges and help commercialize technologies and innovative solutions that advance the state's OSW industry. The grant will be awarded to the application with the highest overall score based on the scoring criteria detailed within these instructions.

Information about the Grant Challenge is available at [OSW Applied Research Fund Administrator Grant Challenge](#).

## Background

In April 2020, Governor Murphy released the Wind Council report calling for a coordinated effort to support OSW workforce development, education, research, and innovation. As part of the State's efforts to support OSW development, the Wind Institute is developing programs that will help accelerate the development of a robust and diverse offshore wind workforce and champion research and innovation that unlocks market potential. This Grant Challenge is a competitive program that will provide grant funding to an eligible entity that can both develop and autonomously manage a Sub-Grant Program open to NJ colleges and universities. The research outputs from the Sub-Grant Program will directly support applied research and tech transfer activities at NJ universities and colleges that demonstrate a potential connection to commercialization or innovation of technologies and align with the following research focus areas: Climate-smart modeling for high performance wind farms; Technological solutions for environmental impact assessments; OSW transmission and grid integration; Power-to-X and energy storage solutions; OSW component design and/or other OSW research priority areas approved by NJEDA.

## Eligibility

The Grant Challenge will be open to non-profit entities with direct experience overseeing and administering one prior offshore wind research and development (R&D) solicitation.

New Jersey Universities and colleges are not eligible to apply for the Grant Challenge, because they are primary recipients of the Sub-Grant Program.

The applicant must be in substantial good standing with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and provide a current tax clearance certificate when the grant is executed to verify they are properly registered to do business in New Jersey and in good standing with the New Jersey Division of Taxation.

## Scope of Work

Grant Challenge applicants must submit proposals that provide a compelling plan for successfully accomplishing the following:

1. Solicitation Development and Management
  - a. Administrator will draft Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the Sub-Grant Program, stipulating solicitation scope of work, timelines, project eligibility criteria, scoring and evaluation factors, and other key information.
    - i. Scoring and evaluation factors must include preference for research projects conducted in collaboration between two or more NJ universities and/or colleges.
    - ii. Indirect costs for Sub-grant awards must cap at 12% of the awarded amount.
  - b. Administrator will advertise the Sub-Grant Program solicitations, once public, to NJ colleges and universities.
  - c. Administrator will run a minimum of two (2) competitive solicitations to their Sub-Grant Program within five (5) years of receiving the Grant Challenge award and host informational webinars or other activities to ensure prospective applicants are aware of the solicitation opportunity.
  - d. Administrator will respond to Sub-Grant Program application inquiries as appropriate via email and/or through an established questions and answer process during the open proposal submission period. Administrator will develop a “frequently asked questions” document or other supports as needed to facilitate applicants.
2. Scoring and Award Selection
  - a. Administrator will perform quality control checks on all proposals received for the Sub-Grant Program to ensure that all submitted proposals meet the minimum requirements for consideration and all required documentation has been provided.
  - b. Administrator will organize and facilitate scoring committee(s) for each solicitation topic area. The scoring committee will consist of subject matter and technical experts in the relevant fields. The Administrator will collect confidentiality agreements from each scorer and establish timelines for scoring to be completed; upon completion, the Administrator will rank proposals by averaging each scoring committee expert’s score.
  - c. Administrator will establish a process to select and award the top-scoring proposals.
  - d. Administrator will integrate processes and protocols to ensure bias and conflicts of interest are mitigated for the scoring and selection of Sub-Grant Program awards.
  - e. Administrator will provide NJEDA with access to all data associated with project proposals.
3. Project Management
  - a. Administrator will manage contract negotiations and enter into contracts with Sub-Grant Program award recipients.
  - b. Administrator will assign members of its staff to manage project awards, keep track of progress against project milestones and deliverables, and process payments.
  - c. Administrator will be responsible for the review and payment of invoices for the Sub-Grant Program and ensuring they comply with the Grant Challenge terms and conditions.

- d. Administrator shall submit quarterly reports to the Authority detailing Administrator's use of grant funds, including the Administrator's direct and indirect costs as well as disbursement of Sub-Grant funds and any associated deliverables submitted by the Sub-Grantees.
- e. For each Sub-Grant research project, Administrator will form an industry advisory board comprised of at least three (3) subject matter experts who can support its commercialization.
- f. Administrator will conduct monthly check-ins with project award recipients and maintain a public project dashboard on a website that details key project information.
- g. Administrator will coordinate with Sub-Grant Program award recipients to provide an annual presentation on research projects and research findings to NJEDA and relevant stakeholders.
- h. Administrator will conduct regular check-ins with NJEDA to provide program updates.

## Eligible Funding Uses

Eligible uses of the Grant Challenge funding include:

- Costs incurred by the Administrator for:
  - Planning, developing, and managing competitive solicitations for the Sub-Grant Program
  - Scoring and awarding proposals received for the Sub-Grant Program.
  - Managing awards through the Sub-Grant Program, including legal agreements, compliance, data, milestones, and budgets, and reporting to NJEDA.
- Costs for the Sub-Grant awards, which will cover research-related expenses incurred by New Jersey universities or colleges awarded through the Sub-Grant Program.

Any expenditures that do not comply with the above will be required to be returned by the Administrator to NJEDA at the end of the Grant Agreement term.

NJEDA has set forth the following additional stipulations and restrictions for funding awarded through this grant challenge:

### **For the Grant Administrator**

- No more than twelve percent (12%) of the grant, or \$762,200 of the \$6,350,000 funding available, can be used for the Administrator's direct and indirect costs. The remaining eighty-eight percent (88%) of the grant, or \$5,588,000, must go to awardees of the Sub-Grant Program.
  - The Administrator cannot use its funding for capital costs.
- Staff from NJ universities or colleges who have applied for a Sub-Grant Program solicitation may not participate in the proposal evaluation committee(s) for that particular solicitation and the Administrator must ensure any other conflicts of interest are mitigated for the funding awarded through the Sub-Grant Program.
- Within thirty (30) calendar days after the Grant Challenge grant agreement term expires, any unspent funds or disallowed costs must be returned by the Administrator to NJEDA.

### **For the Sub-Grantees**

- NJEDA will not require tax clearance or due diligence checks with other New Jersey agencies for the Sub- Grant awardees.
- Capital costs are allowable costs for research projects awarded through the Sub-Grant Program. Sub-Grantees who identify capital costs as an expected use of funding will be required to acknowledge as part of their application for the Sub-Grant Program that they will be subject to New Jersey labor compliance laws and regulations, including New Jersey affirmative action and prevailing wage, and New Jersey Contractor Registration and that they may be audited.
- Research project proposals submitted for the Sub-Grant Program must at a minimum:
  - Focus on one or more of the following research priority areas:
    - Climate-smart modeling for high performance wind farms;
    - Technological solutions for environmental impact assessments;
    - OSW transmission and grid integration;
    - Power-to-X and energy storage solutions;
    - OSW component design; and/or other OSW research priority areas subject to approval by NJEDA staff.
  - Demonstrate a connection to potential commercialization or innovation in technology, construction and operations practices, or other practices that advance OSW development.
  - Include a holistic timeline for the research project that does not exceed a period of three years and is no less than three months from project start to end.
  - Include a budget proposal that features clearly defined payment milestones tied to the requested Sub-Grant award amount. The budget milestones must include specific research activities and outcomes throughout the duration of the project with specific verification method(s) outlined to confirm the milestone has been met.
  - Agree to present and share research data and findings with the NJEDA at least once annually while the research project is active, excluding any information that is or will be protected as intellectual property.
  - Submit completed research to be featured on the Research with New Jersey website ([www.researchwithnj.com](http://www.researchwithnj.com)).

## Funding Disbursement

The Administrator will enter into a grant agreement with NJEDA, and funds will be disbursed on the following schedule:

- Upon execution of the grant agreement, NJEDA will provide a disbursement equal to the agreed upon amount for the Administrator’s direct and indirect costs.
- The remaining balance will be disbursed upon the launch of each Sub-Grant Program solicitation, with the disbursement amount equal to the total funding made available through each respective Sub-Grant Program solicitation.

## Required Items for Submission

Access to the online application portal will be available on NJEDA’s website at [OSW Applied Research Fund Administrator Grant Challenge](#) on November 4, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Applications must be submitted by December 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EDT.

An application checklist that includes all required documentation will be posted on the program website at [OSW Applied Research Fund Administrator Grant Challenge](#), and applications should check the program's website for the final checklist before submission. Required documents will include, but may not be limited to:

- A copy of the applicant's Tax Clearance Certificate: Certificates may be requested through the State of NJ Premier Business Services (PBS) portal online.
- Applicant's organizational formation documents.
- Program budget using NJEDA's template that clearly lists the requested grant amount and itemized costs to develop and deliver the program.
- Complete responses to the questions listed in the section below.
- Proposal narrative between 7-15 pages as detailed below.

## Application Questions

The following information will be required as part of the Program Information section of the application.

- 1.) Is your organization a non-profit entity?
- 2.) Has your organization overseen and administered one prior competitive offshore wind research and development solicitation? If yes, please briefly describe the solicitation you have administered previously.
- 3.) What total percentage of the requested a grant amount, if any, will be for your organization's direct or indirect costs. Note: there is a maximum cap of 12% for these expenses
- 4.) Do you acknowledge all reporting requirements as stipulated in the grant challenge, including submitting quarterly reports detailing use of Administration Grant funds as well as disbursement of Sub-Grant funds and any associated deliverables submitted by the Sub-Grantees?
- 5.) Do you acknowledge any construction on this project, undertaken by sub-grant awardees, is subject to New Jersey prevailing wage and affirmative action requirements and any contractor for such work must be registered with the New Jersey Department of Labor (DOL) and possess a valid public works certificate at the time of approval?
- 6.) Do you acknowledge Sub-Grant Program applications will have no application costs?
- 7.) Do you acknowledge that Sub-Grantees are required to submit their research outputs for posting on Research with NJ website?
- 8.) Do you acknowledge that within thirty calendar days after the Grant Challenge grant agreement term expires, any unspent funds or disallowed costs must be returned by the Administrator to NJEDA?
- 9.) Do you acknowledge that you are aware of the required deliverables and the description of services the Grant Challenge Administrator will be responsible for?

## Narrative Response

Applicants will be directed to upload a PDF document no less than 7 pages and no more than 15 pages that provides narrative responses to the following questions, inclusive of any charts, graphs, tables, information/data graphics, and works cited but excludes any of the other documents required for this grant application, including organization formation documents and program budget. The narrative

questions included under each sub-section are meant to act as guides towards meeting the evaluation criteria for each component.

**1. Experience and approach for developing and administering research solicitations for offshore wind**

- a. Provide a summary of your organization's history, mission, and background.
- b. What are the primary activities your organization has undertaken that advance offshore wind research and development?
- c. What is your prior experience managing and administering competitive offshore wind applied research solicitations?
- d. What are the qualifications of each key project team member?
- e. What is your approach and concept for developing and administering a Sub-Grant Program for NJ colleges and universities that would advance the development and commercialization of innovative technologies for the offshore wind industry?
- f. How many Sub-Grant Program solicitations do you expect to implement over the five-year term of the grant, and how much funding, on average, do you expect to be available per solicitation? Note: The Grant Administrator is required to run at least two solicitation rounds for the Sub-Grant Program.
- g. What is your approach for handling any intellectual property and confidentiality matters resulting from the Sub-Grant Program research projects?
- h. What is your proposed timeline and schedule for the Sub-Grant Program?

**2. Approach for engaging subject matter and technical experts to score and select research proposals**

- a. What is your strategy for identifying and coordinating subject matter experts to participate in Sub-Grant Program proposal review and evaluation process?
- b. What is your approach for technical evaluation of Sub-Grant Program applications, including how you will leverage subject matter experts to evaluate the commercial potential of proposed research projects?
- c. What is your approach for scoring and awarding Sub-Grant Program applicants? How will biases and conflicts of interests be mitigated during the scoring process?
- d. How will Sub-Grant Program solicitations be leveraged to align offshore wind industry stakeholders towards common R&D objectives?

**3. Approach for Project Management of Research Grant Awards**

- a. How will your organization manage contracts, budgets, and disbursements for Sub-Grant Program awardees?
- b. How will your organization manage communications and regular check-ins with Sub-Grant Program awardees?
- c. What technical and other supports will be provided to Sub-Grant Program awardees for their research projects, including for commercializing the research produced?
- d. What are the key research metrics you expect to track and monitor for Sub-Grant Program research projects?
- e. Where will the Sub-Grant Program research be presented and/or published?
- f. What will be your organization's process for tracking and reporting data and outcomes for each research project to NJEDA?

**4. Administration Budget**

- a. Please provide a justification of your organization’s direct and indirect expenses, as detailed in the budget submitted with your grant application.

## Evaluation and Scoring Criteria

Applications will be accepted during a competitive application round through the program’s online application portal, which will be open from November 4, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. EDT to December 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EDT. All interested parties must complete and submit their applications online through this portal by the deadline to be considered for the Grant Challenge award. The application can be found at: [OSW Applied Research Fund Administrator Grant Challenge](#). Pursuant to EDA’s revised fee rules, no application fee will be charged.

After the application window has closed, NEDA staff will review all Grant Challenge applications for completeness and compliance with required documentation and minimum requirements. Following the completeness review, applications with missing or incomplete documentation, or requiring additional clarification, will receive an email notice from NJEDA and will have ten (10) business days to cure any deficiencies or provide any needed clarifications. Applicants should submit missing documentation or requested clarifications electronically to [windinstitute@njeda.gov](mailto:windinstitute@njeda.gov) with the email subject line “*NJ OSW Applied Research Grant Challenge – Missing Documentation Submission for [APPLICANT NAME]*”.

After the ten business days, any application that is not complete or for which clarification has not been provided will be deemed incomplete and will not be evaluated or scored. All complete and compliant applications will be evaluated, scored, and ranked by an Evaluation Committee comprised of NJEDA staff. The Evaluation Committee will evaluate, score, and rank applications based on four primary criteria: (see Scoring Table below for more detail).

1. Experience and approach for developing and administering research solicitations for offshore wind
2. Approach for engaging subject matter and technical experts to score and select research proposals
3. Approach for project management of research grant awards
4. Administration Budget

The minimum score requirement to be considered for an award is eighty (80) points, with the highest score possibility being one hundred (100) points. NJEDA will fund the top-scoring proposal with the grant funding amount of \$6.35 million.



## Scoring Table

Description of Scoring Components		Maximum Points
<b>Criteria 1 - Experience and approach for developing and administering research solicitations for offshore wind</b>		
Possesses substantive experience administering R&D competitive funding solicitations to advance OSW technology.		20
Details a compelling and impactful concept for developing a new Sub-Grant Program for NJ colleges and universities to conduct applied research that has the potential for commercialization or innovation in technology, construction and operations practices, or other practices that advance offshore wind development in NJ.		20
<b>Total</b>		40
<b>Criteria 2 - Approach for engaging subject matter and technical experts to score and select research proposals</b>		
Details compelling plan for organizing and facilitating scoring committee(s) consisting of subject matter and technical experts to review proposals received for the Sub-Grant Program.		10
Details a compelling plan for engaging with the OSW industry and subject matter experts to analyze the commercial impact of research projects.		5
Outlines a clear strategy for leveraging subject matter experts to align technology innovators, research institutions, project developers, supply chain companies, utilities, government agencies, and other stakeholders towards common R&D objectives.		5
<b>Total</b>		20
<b>Criteria 3 - Approach for project management of research grant awards</b>		
Describes a clear and realistic approach to administratively manage contracts, budgets, and disbursements with Sub-Grant Program awardees.		15
Establishes robust technical supports for Sub-Grant Program awardees throughout the duration of each research project.		5
Details a process for tracking Sub-Grant Program research projects against project milestones and deliverables.		5
Details a clear process for reporting Sub-Grant Program data and outcomes to NJEDA.		5
<b>Total</b>		30
<b>Criteria 4 – Administration Budget</b>		
Provides a realistic Administration budget.		10
<b>Total</b>		10

## Questions & Answers

Questions regarding the Grant Challenge may be submitted via email to [windinstitute@njeda.gov](mailto:windinstitute@njeda.gov) by November 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EDT with the subject line “*Questions – OSW Applied Research Grant Challenge*”. EDA will post answers on the OSW Applied Research Grant Challenge website by November 26, 2024 5:00 p.m. EDT. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to check the OSW Applied Research Administration Grant Challenge website prior to submission of the application.**