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# Indigenous Community Energy Plan (ICEP) Program

Program Guidelines  
Version 2.3  
June 2023

ICEP Program resources available at:

[IESO website - ICEP](#)

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## 1. Background

Since 2009, the Independent Electricity System Operator (“IESO”) (previously, the Ontario Power Authority) has designed, administered and managed a portfolio of Energy Support Programs (“ESPs”) to promote community energy security and inclusive participation in Ontario’s energy sector. More information about the ESPs can be found at [the IESO website](#).

The IESO regularly conducts reviews of its ESPs, informed by feedback from Ontario Indigenous communities and organizations. In 2022, the IESO sought input from these communities and organizations on the proposed redesign of the ESPs. The IESO subsequently identified the need to make an application intake window available in Q2 2023. In order to facilitate this timing, a limited number of revisions to the ESPs were able to be implemented in advance of the window. The revisions address some of the feedback received, while continuing to demonstrate the IESO’s commitment to support the building of Indigenous capacity and participation in the energy sector. The implementation of a more fulsome redesign of the ESPs is anticipated in 2024.

## 2. Program Objectives

The objective of the ICEP Program is to support First Nation and Métis Communities, and First Nation and Métis Organizations, to develop and maintain an updated community energy plan designed to enhance community energy security.

The ICEP Program provides funding to support:

- Development of a new community energy plan; and
- Updating an existing community energy plan.

The ICEP program is intended to support the community-led development of an energy plan.

When seeking funding for the development of a new community energy plan, applicants are encouraged, but not required, to have a Community Energy Champion (CEC) hired prior to applying to the ICEP Program.

When seeking funding for updates to an existing community energy plan, applicants are now required to have a CEC hired prior to submitting an application to the ICEP Program.

## 3. Program Overview

A community energy plan is as unique as the First Nation or Métis Community, or First Nation or Métis Organization, for which it is designed. Ideally, a community energy plan will help identify challenges and opportunities to increase community and organizational energy security. In practice, the community energy plan can include any number of elements, but at a minimum, must contain the following six components:

Component	Description
<p>Baseline Energy Assessment</p>	<p>A benchmark of the First Nation or Métis Community’s, or First Nation or Métis Organization’s, current energy performance that allows for the identification of potential opportunities for energy savings. At a minimum, to the extent possible, the baseline energy assessment should include the following data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Annual energy usage in the First Nation or Métis Community, or First Nation or Métis Organization, based on historical data for at least one prior year;</li> <li>b. Energy generation and consumption broken down by fuel type (i.e. gasoline, propane, wood, diesel, electricity), and consumption data broken down by end use (i.e. residential, commercial, transportation, etc.);</li> <li>c. Energy cost data by fuel type and sector;</li> <li>d. Energy usage trends (i.e., occupancy data; heating; ventilating; cooling; lighting; commercial energy consuming equipment) for residential and commercial buildings; and</li> <li>e. A summary of the results of the baseline energy assessment research including a description of the data collection process, methodologies used for data analysis and any energy mapping undertaken.</li> <li>f. The baseline energy assessment may also include greenhouse gas emissions data and renewable resource potential.</li> </ul>
<p>Future Energy Needs and Resources</p>	<p>An assessment of the First Nation or Métis Community’s, or First Nation or Métis Organization’s, future forecasted energy needs, including options for addressing these identified needs (i.e., conservation, energy efficiency, demand management, renewable energy and small-scale generation).</p>

Component	Description
Community Engagement	<p>Identification of concrete ways in which the community energy plan has been tailored to the specific strengths, needs and opportunities of the First Nation or Métis Community, or First Nation or Métis Organization, as demonstrated through direct engagement with community members, constituents, and other relevant parties. A description of how engagement will inform the ongoing development, implementation, and updating of the community energy plan should be included. For a new community energy plan there must be a minimum of three (3) engagements, including one engagement that is specifically geared towards the development of a community energy vision statement as further described below. For an update to a community energy plan, there must be a minimum of one (1) engagement.</p>
Community Energy Vision Statement	<p>A community energy vision statement should be developed and included as part of the community energy plan. For a new community energy plan, a community energy vision statement should be developed through the targeted community visioning engagement. This engagement should identify the core values and the vision the community holds for its energy future. For an update to a community energy plan, a community energy vision statement should be developed with input from the community, but does not require a targeted engagement.</p>
Short, Medium, and Long Term Energy Goals	<p>Identification of specific energy goals that follow the SMART model and are: specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound. These goals should align with the community energy vision statement and provide more detailed information about the outcomes that the community seeks to achieve. The goals should be organized into short term (1 year), medium term (2-5 years), and long term (5+ years).</p>

Component	Description
Implementation Plan	<p>Identification of actionable ways to meet energy needs and achieve energy goals with a clearly defined implementation plan. For each energy goal, a corresponding list of community energy actions should be outlined. Community energy actions should describe the specific actions to be taken as a pathway to achieving an energy goal. Each energy goal and each community energy action under it should have a corresponding anticipated timeline and estimated budget, as well as a description of the specific funding programs and incentives that may be accessed and the identification of other mechanisms for funding the community energy actions.</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Community Energy Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Energy Action 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Anticipated Timeline</li> <li>b. Estimated Budget</li> <li>c. Potential Funding Programs, Incentives and Other Funding Mechanisms</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 4. Eligibility Criteria

### a. Eligible Applicants

- First Nation or Métis Communities; and
- First Nation or Métis Organizations (including Friendship Centres, Indigenous housing providers, and others).

Funding is not provided to individuals. In recognition that applicants may wish to take a collaborative approach, a joint application for a shared single community energy plan may be submitted by two or more eligible applicants. Applicant eligibility for the ICEP Program is determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the IESO or the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, as applicable.

Please see section 7 below for definitions of key eligibility terms.

### b. Eligible Community Energy Plans and Funding

All applications to the ICEP Program must fit within one of the following ICEP Program streams:

Stream	Maximum Funding Amount and Term	CEC Prerequisite
Development of a new community energy plan	Up to \$90,000 Up to \$95,000 for remote communities <sup>1</sup>  Two (2) years	None
Updating an existing community energy plan	Up to \$25,000 Up to \$30,000 for remote communities <sup>1</sup>  One (1) year	Applicants will be required to have a CEC hired to be eligible for funding under this stream

**c. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses**

Additional criteria regarding Eligible Expenses and a list of Ineligible Expenses are set out in the Funding Agreement, which must be signed by all successful applicants in order to receive funding.

**Eligible Expenses**

Funding is provided under the ICEP Program for Eligible Expenses that are directly related and reasonably necessary to complete or update the community energy plan. Eligible Expenses can include costs associated with activities carried out by duly qualified internal resources and with the services of duly qualified external service providers. However, costs incurred in respect of a single external service provider will only qualify as Eligible Expenses up to an amount equivalent to 60% of the maximum funding amount listed in the Funding Agreement.

**Ineligible Expenses**

Funding is not provided under the ICEP Program for Ineligible Expenses, which include:

- Costs that are not directly related to the development or update of the community energy plan;
- Costs related to the provision of legal advice or the development or distribution of legal templates, precedent agreements, or materials that are considered or could be considered legal or financial advice;
- Costs related to activities for which funding was received in relation to the community energy plan from another source;
- Costs that the applicant or joint applicant(s) did not directly incur;
- Costs incurred in respect of a single external service provider in excess of 60% of the maximum funding amount under the Funding Agreement;

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<sup>1</sup> In acknowledgement of the higher costs in remote locations, remote communities may request an additional \$5,000 under each stream. Please include a written request in the application form for consideration for the additional \$5,000.

- Costs incurred, or relating to any activity, matter or thing carried out before the start of, or after the end of, the Funding Agreement;
- Costs related to meetings with or the lobbying of any governmental authority or the IESO;
- Costs associated with the use of personal devices (e.g. personal mobile or landline phones, laptops or internet service provider fees, etc.);
- Costs related to administrative operating expenses such as real estate expenses, insurance, utilities, memberships, dues, subscriptions, accounting, or maintenance of equipment;
- Costs incurred that are not evidenced by the activities and deliverables, including any other documentation required by the Funding Agreement, or other evidence of having been incurred satisfactory to the IESO, in its sole and absolute discretion;
- Costs not approved by the IESO as part of the application and budget, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the IESO, in its sole and absolute discretion;
- Costs for travel, hospitality or meals that do not comply with the [Ontario Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive](#);
- Costs that, in the IESO's view, in its sole and absolute discretion, materially deviate from the approved application in relation to the work plan, budget, community energy plan team or timelines; and
- Costs in respect of HST.

## 5. Application Process

### a. Background

The ICEP Program accepts submissions on an ongoing basis, with application submission dates spread throughout the year. The application review dates will be posted online at [the IESO website](#). Before applying to the ICEP Program, applicants should review these ICEP Program Guidelines and the Funding Agreement carefully, and are encouraged to seek independent legal and other professional advice, as needed.

The ICEP Program application development process is supportive. Applicants should contact ICEP Program staff with any questions at [icep@ieso.ca](mailto:icep@ieso.ca). ICEP Program staff will be available to provide feedback and guidance throughout application development, and may ask for additional information or references. As a condition of funding support, the IESO may require changes to your application. Please allow sufficient time for application review and feedback prior to submittal of your final application.

### b. Application Submission

All applications must be in the form provided by the IESO, which can be found on [the IESO website](#). Please submit your application to [icep@ieso.ca](mailto:icep@ieso.ca). Please refer to Appendix A for additional details regarding the application process and evaluation timelines. Applicants are encouraged to contact ICEP Program staff prior to submitting an application.

## 6. Application Evaluation

Applications that meet the completeness and eligibility requirements of the ICEP Program are assessed by a review committee comprised of IESO staff that are not responsible for the delivery and oversight of the ESPs, including the ICEP Program. The review committee makes funding recommendations to the IESO. Final funding decisions are made by, and are at the discretion of, the IESO.

Funding decisions are based on the extent to which an application addresses community energy needs and the degree to which it satisfies the ICEP Program application review criteria outlined immediately below:

Review Criteria	Description
Strategic fit	Will the community energy plan or updated community energy plan enhance First Nation or Métis energy-related capacity and participation? Will the development or updating of a community energy plan support enhanced community energy security?
Community benefit, need, and support	How would a community energy plan or updated community energy plan benefit the community? Has a document expressing community support (Band Council Resolution, board resolution, etc.) been included with the application?
Community energy plan team and partners	Have a sufficient number of community or organization members been included on the energy team? Do the internal and external resources have the qualifications and experience required to execute the development or update of the community energy plan? Is there evidence of strong and appropriate partnerships if applicable?
Financial feasibility	Is the budget detailed, reasonable and justified? Have revenue sources for costs outside of those assigned to ICEP Program funding been identified and secured?
Community energy plan implementation	Are the purpose and intended outcomes of the community energy plan clearly articulated? Is the plan to realize the development or updating of a community energy plan sufficiently detailed and reasonable? Are the necessary systems in place to support implementation of the community energy plan after completion or has a plan been considered for putting supports in place?



Review Criteria	Description
Community engagement	Has an engagement plan been developed to specifically target the community or organization? Has appropriate rationale been provided?

## 7. Key Definitions

Key Term	Description
Community Energy Champion or CEC	means a designated energy worker to support First Nation or Métis Communities and First Nation or Métis Organizations to help plan, implement and evaluate energy-related priorities.
First Nation or Métis Community	means, for the purposes of the ICEP Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a First Nation in Ontario that is a “band” as defined in the Indian Act (Canada);</li> <li>b) the Métis Nation of Ontario or any of its active Chartered Community Councils; or</li> <li>c) a Person, other than a natural person, that has previously been determined by the Government of Ontario to represent the collective interests of a community that is composed of First Nation or Métis individuals.</li> </ul>
First Nation or Métis Organization	means, for the purposes of the ICEP Program, an organization that, as determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the IESO, represents the interests of more than one First Nation or Métis Community, or was established to provide key services to one or more First Nation or Métis Communities or members of one or more First Nation or Métis Communities.
Funding Agreement	means the agreement that successful applicants must sign in order to be eligible to receive funding under the ICEP Program.

Key Term	Description
Remote Community	<p>means a First Nation or Métis Community that meets one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is not connected to the IESO-administered electricity grid;</li> <li>b) lacks all-year road access to the Ontario road network; or</li> <li>c) if connected throughout the year to the Ontario road network, is located more than 350 km by ground transportation from the nearest urban centre with a population of 40,000 or greater. (Note: For communities in northern Ontario the following are urban centres with a population of 40,000 or greater: North Bay, Sault Sainte Marie, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Timmins and Winnipeg).</li> </ul>

## 8. General

- a. Receipt of an application to the ICEP Program does not constitute a commitment by the IESO to support the application, nor does it create a business relationship between the applicant, its partners and the IESO.
- b. The approval of the ICEP Program review committee is required prior to the IESO being able to offer a Funding Agreement to the applicant.
- c. Financial support from the IESO to an applicant to the ICEP Program will only be provided upon execution of the Funding Agreement between the applicant and the IESO, and only according to the terms and conditions therein.
- d. Any financial support provided to an applicant under the ICEP Program does not create a relationship of principal and agent between IESO and the applicant. Further, the applicant has no authority to create any such relationship or related obligation, express or implied, in the name of or on behalf of, the IESO.
- e. The IESO reserves the right to make public the names of applicants, the title and a description of their proposed community energy plan, and the amount of funds applied for. All other information submitted by the applicant in its application will also be treated as non-confidential unless clearly labelled as confidential by the applicant.
- f. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the ICEP Program Guidelines and any Funding Agreement entered into, the provisions of the Funding Agreement govern.
- g. The IESO reserves the right to:
  - 1. cap the amount of funding provided under the ICEP Program in any year; and
  - 2. revise the ICEP Program Guidelines and standard form of Funding Agreement template from time to time.

## Appendix A – Application Process

Steps	Evaluation Criteria and Timeline
Step 1: The Application	<p>The Program Guidelines will help you understand what you need to do. Please thoroughly review it and the application template prior to starting an application. We're here to support you if you have questions. We encourage you to contact us before you begin your application at <a href="mailto:icep@ieso.ca">icep@ieso.ca</a></p>
Step 2: Application Submission	<p>Submit your application to <a href="mailto:icep@ieso.ca">icep@ieso.ca</a> by July 28, 2023 at 11.59 p.m. EDT.</p> <p>Please be sure to PDF all materials where possible, and ensure you have double checked the submission checklist in the application.</p> <p>Late or incomplete application submissions will not be accepted, unless the IESO has been notified in advance of the intake deadline and agreed to accept an application submission after the intake deadline.</p>
Step 3: Initial Review	<p>Within 30 business days of receiving the application, we will do our best to review it for completeness and eligibility. A clarification and feedback period may be included as part of the initial review to request additional information or amendments to the application.</p> <p>If your application passes the completeness and eligibility review, we will give it a validated time stamp, and communicate to you that it has been accepted for further consideration.</p>
Step 4: Review Committee	<p>Next, the application will be reviewed by an internal review committee based on the criteria outlined in the Program Guidelines. This can include project scope, feasibility, project team and other considerations related to the program.</p>
Step 5: Funding Agreement	<p>If your application is successful, you will be notified by email in Q3 2023 and offered a Funding Agreement with the IESO (see a <a href="#">sample Funding Agreement</a>) in Q4 2023.</p>

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