



## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION  
FOR  
WISCONSIN GREEN INNOVATION FUND

ISSUED BY:

WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ON: June 17, 2024

All questions regarding this RFI must be submitted in writing to Francisco Sayu at [francisco.sayu@wedc.org](mailto:francisco.sayu@wedc.org) by July 21, 2024, at 5:00 pm CT.

PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY:  
**July 2, 4:00 PM CT**

TO:

Francisco Sayu via email at [francisco.sayu@wedc.org](mailto:francisco.sayu@wedc.org)

**LOOK FORWARD ►**

## **I. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation**

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is a public body corporate and politic governed by Chapter 238 of the Wisconsin Statutes. WEDC was created under 2011 Wisconsin Act 7 and 2011 Wisconsin Act 32 to replace the economic and community development operations of the former Wisconsin Department of Commerce and to serve as the State of Wisconsin's lead economic development organization. WEDC is governed by a sixteen-member Board of Directors. WEDC's Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Governor.

WEDC provides financial and technical assistance and services to businesses and organizations in Wisconsin for the purpose of strengthening economic development and creating and retaining jobs. As of June 30, 2023, WEDC had approximately 124 employees and an operating expenditure for fiscal year 2023 totaled approximately \$85 million, including \$33.5 million of federal funds. Revenues to finance its operating budget are derived primarily from state appropriation, loan repayments and other income.

WEDC operates five economic and community development divisions and eight finance and administrative departments primarily in the Madison, Wisconsin location. WEDC provides grants, loans, loan guarantees, tax credits and other financial and technical assistance to its customers. WEDC utilizes the Intacct accounting system as well as Salesforce and a grant and loan management system.

## **II. Background**

On April 19, 2023, Gov. Tony Evers signed Executive Order 195 establishing the Green Ribbon Commission on Clean Energy and Environmental Innovation to provide guidance to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Department of Administration (DOA) in developing the Green Innovation Fund (GIF). The GIF and its partners will leverage public and private financing to invest in the deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects across the state, reduce carbon emissions, lower energy costs for families, expand access to clean, affordable energy options in Wisconsin, build resilience, and adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change. Based on guidance from the Commission, WEDC and DOA continue to develop the GIF.

## **III. Scope**

The GIF anticipates receipt of federal funding to provide accessible, affordable financings for clean technology projects that benefit Wisconsin's communities by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening climate resilience, and mobilizing public and private capital to stimulate additional deployment of climate solutions.

To assist in meeting Wisconsin's clean energy goals, WEDC is issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to gather feedback from stakeholders, including private capital partners, impact investors, developers, local governments, community groups, philanthropies, and other market participants to:

1. Solicit initial feedback on the potential use of [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#) (GGRF) to finance carbon-free distributed energy generation and storage, building decarbonization, net-zero buildings, and zero-emissions transportation projects.

**This is not a Request for Proposals (RFP), and no financing is being offered through this RFI. WEDC anticipates offering financing for projects through the GIF at a later date.**

#### **IV. Priority Investment Categories**

The GIF will prioritize projects or programs aligned with Wisconsin's [Clean Energy Plan](#) and the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. A non-exclusive list of potentially eligible projects includes:

1. **Distributed Energy Generation & Storage:** Projects, technologies, or activities that generate and/or store zero-emissions power near to the point of use, instead of in centralized plants, and that have the potential to increase grid resilience. Examples include distributed solar, distributed wind, geothermal/ground-source energy, and stand-alone energy storage.
2. **Net-Zero Emissions Buildings:** new construction or retrofit of buildings that use renewable energy sources to provide all the energy consumed on an annual basis.
3. **Decarbonization Retrofits of Existing Buildings:** Projects, technologies, or activities that retrofit an existing building to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Examples include energy efficiency improvements, indoor air quality enhancements, virtual power plant technology, fuel-to-electric power transition, diesel generator replacement with battery storage, and community facility retrofits with on-site solar, storage, and charging infrastructure.
4. **Zero Emissions Transportation:** Projects, technologies, or activities that support zero-emissions transportation modes, especially in communities burdened by existing diesel pollution, particulate matter concentration, and degraded air quality. Examples include new electric school buses and charging infrastructure, electric transit buses or shared vehicles, small business fleet electrification, as well as public and multi-use charging depots (including for clean school buses and community facilities).
5. **Emissions Reduction technologies for Agricultural or Industrial Uses:** Projects, technologies or activities that reduce or eliminate direct greenhouse gas emissions and hazardous air pollutants from agricultural and industrial activities. This could include projects to change inputs for these processes from fossil fuel to clean energy sources, reduce or manage non-energy sources of emissions (like fertilizer application), or deploy distributed generation and storage technologies to farms or industrial sites.
6. **Climate Resilience:** Projects, technologies or activities that advance proactive solutions, prevention measures, and mitigation of the impacts of increased natural disaster severity and frequency due to the current and worsening effects of climate change. Examples include flood mitigation and infrastructure upgrades.

#### **Minimum Requirements**

Focusing on these priority investment categories, the GIF is seeking project information to help design products and programs best suited to accelerate progress toward the State's clean energy and climate pollution reduction goals and better understand the scale of financing needs across various market sectors. The GIF will prioritize feedback on assets, projects, or programs that meet the following requirements:

- Assets/projects that are in the State of Wisconsin
- Assets/projects that substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Assets/projects that replace existing fossil-fuel-based technology with an end-use electric technology
- Assets/projects that adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change and build resilience
- Assets/projects/programs that serve Low-income and Disadvantaged Communities (LIDAC) as defined in the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grants<sup>1</sup>, or that provide at least 40% of direct benefits to these communities
- Assets/projects/programs that create new project financing versus refinancing.

### **Specifics of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF)**

The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) is a federal investment of \$27 billion that aims to tackle the climate crisis while promoting economic competitiveness and energy independence. It comprises of three programs, namely the National Clean Investment Fund, Clean Communities Investment Accelerator, and Solar for All programs. Together, they fund the deployment of clean technology across the country. These initiatives focus on financing clean technology deployment in low-income and disadvantaged communities while building the capacity of community lenders serving those areas. They also aim to promote the adoption of clean, distributed solar energy, reducing energy bills for millions of Americans in underserved communities. These programs align with President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, creating job opportunities in domestic industries. The GIF seeks input on ways it could design programs that ensures GGRF funds make the maximum impact across the state.

- **National Clean Investment Fund**

The \$14 billion National Clean Investment Fund will establish financing institutions for clean technology projects nationwide. National Green Banks will partner with private investors and other organizations to deploy clean energy projects, mobilize private capital, create jobs, and bring energy bill savings and cleaner air to millions of Americans. This RFI supports the Green Innovation Fund's strategy for partnering with National Green Banks.

- **Clean Communities Investment Accelerator**

The Clean Communities Investment Accelerator program will establish hubs in low-income and disadvantaged communities to provide funding and technical assistance to community lenders for deploying clean energy projects. Five selected organizations will offer capitalization funding, technical assistance subawards, and technical

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<sup>1</sup> Any community that meets at least one of the following characteristics:

- Identified as disadvantaged by the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST);
- Any census block group that is at or above the 90th percentile for any of [EJScreen's Supplemental Indexes](#) when compared to the nation or state, and/or
- Any geographic area within Tribal lands as included in EJScreen.

assistance services. The program is aimed at building capacity of community lenders for financing projects in those communities. All capital under the CCIA program is dedicated to low-income and disadvantaged communities.

- **Solar for All**

The Solar for All program has chosen 60 applicants to create or expand low-income solar programs, benefitting 900,000 households in disadvantaged communities nationwide. Wisconsin is among 60 states, territories, Tribal governments, municipalities, and nonprofits across the country receiving Solar for All awards. The Wisconsin Solar for All Program aims to increase solar capacity by offering multiple avenues to the solar power market, serving as many low-income Wisconsin residents as possible.

## **V. Potential Respondents**

The GIF is interested in supporting a wide range of entities undertaking clean energy projects.

The GIF encourages all interested parties to provide feedback to the RFI. These include large scale renewable energy developers or real estate developers and building owners, but also smaller entities that may be more community focused. Potential Respondents to the RFI may include but are not limited to:

- Property owners
- Non-profit organizations
- Organizations that support clean energy or community development projects
- Community-based organizations, including those representing Environmental Justice Communities Other private entities
- Small and medium size business
- Local/Tribal governmental entities
- Real estate developers
- Renewable energy developers and operators
- Financial institutions

## **VI. Timeline**

June 17, 2024	Distribution of RFI
June 24, 2024	Informational webinar
July 2, 2024	Deadline for projects interested in participating in the Coalition for Green Capital's (CGC) initial National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF) competition
September 30, 2024	Anticipated response date for projects competing in the CGC's initial NCIF competition

## **VII. How to submit your project information**

Download, complete, and submit the provided spreadsheet template to provide information about your project. Use a single spreadsheet for multiple projects, if applicable.

**VIII. Terms and Conditions**

The following terms and conditions affect responses to this RFI. These terms shall be adhered to by any interested respondent and are non-negotiable.

**A. Confidentiality**

Respondent acknowledges that all information, data, records, and documents disclosed by WEDC to respondent, or which come to respondent's attention during the course of its response to this RFI constitute valuable and proprietary assets of WEDC (Confidential Information). Respondent agrees not to disclose the Confidential Information, either directly or indirectly, to any person, entity or affiliate unless required to do so by legal process of law without prior authorization by WEDC. If required to disclose Confidential Information by legal process, Respondent shall provide WEDC with prompt notice so WEDC may seek an appropriate protective order. Except as required to respond to this RFI or during the course of its performance under the terms of any resulting Agreement, respondent shall not use any Confidential Information for its own purposes.

**B. Conflict of Interests**

Respondents' response to this RFI must include, in writing, disclosure of any potential conflict of interests that may arise from respondent's engagement with WEDC. Any resulting collaboration may be terminated if the respondent fails to disclose a potential conflict of interest, and if WEDC determines such failure to disclose involves a material conflict of interest.

**C. Public Records**

Responses to this RFI, any communication with WEDC, and any resulting work product are subject to the public records laws of the State of Wisconsin, § 19.31 et seq. Respondents shall mark documents "confidential" where appropriate for financial and other sensitive materials that should be, to the extent possible, be kept in confidence. WEDC will notify the respondent if it receives a public records request for materials marked confidential.

**IX. RFI Process****A. Reasonable Accommodations**

WEDC will provide reasonable accommodations, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, for individuals with disabilities upon request.

**B. Communication with WEDC & Submitting Questions**

All communication regarding this RFI shall be directed to WEDC's Vice President of Productivity and Sustainability, Francisco Sayu at francisco.sayu@wedc.org. Information regarding this RFI obtained from other sources is unofficial and nonbinding. Communication with other sources may be cause for the rejection of a proposal. All questions regarding this RFI must be submitted in writing to WEDC's Vice President of Productivity and Sustainability, Francisco Sayu at francisco.sayu@wedc.org by July 2, 4:00 PM CT.

**C. Incurring Costs**

WEDC is not liable for any cost incurred by a respondent for responding to this RFI. This RFI is for information gathering purposes only and should not be construed as a solicitation or obligation on the part of the WEDC or the GIF to provide funding.

**D. News Releases**

News releases pertaining to the RFI or to the acceptance, rejection or evaluation of proposals shall not be made without the prior written approval of WEDC.

E. Submitting the Proposal

Respondents shall Download, complete, and submit the provided spreadsheet template to Vice President of Productivity and Sustainability, Francisco Sayu at francisco.sayu@wedc.org, no later than July 2, 4:00 PM CT. Proposal responses should follow the sequence and outline presented in this RFI.

F. Post-Submission Process

The GIF may invite Respondents to provide additional information to better understand the information provided in the submittal. The GIF may also request meetings with some or all of the Respondents to discuss details of responses.

Based on the feedback provided via the RFI, the GIF anticipates designing products within the parameters of the GIF's Investment Plan. Future opportunities will be made available for respondents and other members of the public to apply for GIF funding regardless of whether they respond to the RFI. The exact nature of these products will depend on product design, relevant project scope, and relevant source of GIF funding.