

Sample Letter of Interest – New ERA

Applicants may utilize this format to fill out a document and upload it in PDF form as your Letter Of Interest (LOI) submission for Empowering Rural America (New ERA) funding and include all information required to be submitted with the LOI as described in the May 16, 2023, Notice of Funding Opportunity. **Please note that all New ERA LOI information must be submitted on Grants.gov.** This includes the completion of Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424). The SF 424 is a fillable form that must be completed on Grants.gov by the LOI submitter. The SF 424 will include the LOI submitter's name and contact information. The LOI submitter must submit all required attachments in Section 15 of the SF 424. The information detailed below must be provided as an attachment. For LOIs with multiple projects, you should use a unique name and number for attachments related to each project (e.g., Entity Project 1, Entity Project 2, etc.).

Applicants should use the RUS geospatial mapping tool to draw the service areas associated with each New ERA Project and then upload Shapefile(s) to Grants.gov as part of an LOI submission. Applicants should go to

<https://ruraldevelopment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0a91fdaecff34b9eb9a9f378085c41ba> and draw a separate Shapefile of the service area for each proposed Project to

be included in a single New ERA LOI. The saved file(s) should be renamed to the Applicant's name and Project name (e.g., bobselectric_project 1.zip). The Shapefile(s) should then be uploaded to Grants.gov as an attachment in Section 15 of the SF 424 during the filing process.

Any Applicant who experiences difficulties using the RUS geospatial mapping tool or has other questions related to Shapefile(s), please send an email to

RD.Innovation.Data@usda.gov. The Agency will work with Applicants to submit through the RUS mapping tool; however, if the Applicant is still unable to utilize the tool, the Applicant may proceed with its LOI submission using its own comparably accurate Shapefile(s).

Additional information on the requirements and submission of LOIs through Grants.gov can be found in the LOI Guide on the New ERA website.

SAMPLE LETTER OF INTEREST

This letter confirms that [**Name of the Eligible Entity**] intends to seek New ERA Program funding from the Rural Utilities Service pursuant to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) published in the Federal Register on May 16, 2023. [**Name of the Eligible Entity**] hereby represents that it meets all the requirements as specified in the NOFO and herewith submits the mandatory information required to comply with the first step of the Application process. [**Name of the Eligible Entity**] intends to submit a complete Application on or before the due date specified in the Invitation to Proceed for Step-2 of the process. Should it be issued an Invitation to Proceed, [**Name of Eligible Entity**] commits to collaborate with the RUS General Field Representative, if necessary, to complete the Application in a timely manner.

Letter of Interest Required Information

- a. Eligible Entity's Profile and Point of Contact Information:
 1. Legal name of the Eligible Entity and applicable organizational information. If the Eligible Entity submitting the LOI is a wholly or jointly owned subsidiary of one or more Eligible Entities, the subsidiary must list its owners in the LOI. If the entity submitting the LOI represents an Eligible Entity or multiple Eligible Entities, the entity must provide organizational information for itself, and all parties involved in the Project(s).
 2. Eligible Entity's address, principal place of business, and website.
 3. Eligible Entity's Tax Identification Number and its Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number from the System for Award Management (SAM) registry ([SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) | [Home](#)).
 4. Specify if the Eligible Entity is: (a) an existing RUS borrower; (b) a former RUS or Rural Electrification Administration (REA) borrower; or (c) has never been an RUS or REA borrower.
 5. Name and title of the Eligible Entity's manager and/or point of contact, including first name, last name, title/position, phone, email, and other relevant contact information.
 6. Project(s) name(s).
 7. Location of the Project(s) and the applicable service area(s) using a digital Shapefile(s). If the Application asserts that a Project or the applicable service area is within a Substantially Underserved Trust Area (SUTA) eligible area, it must describe how such location, or such applicable service area, is a SUTA covered area as provided in 7 CFR 1700.105.
- b. A statement as to whether the subsequent New ERA Application will provide a request for a Project Award or System Award.
- c. Identify the Eligible Entity's value of its net assets and specify if it has ever been placed in receivership, court mandated liquidation, under a workout agreement, has

declared bankruptcy, has had a decree or order issued for relief in any bankruptcy, insolvency, or other similar action.

1. If the Eligible Entity is a current RUS borrower, the Eligible Entity must not be in default and must be current on all of its obligations to RUS.
2. The Applicant must submit a copy of its audited balance sheet and income statements for the last three years.
3. If applicable, the Eligible Entity must provide the balance sheet and income statements for the last three years of the entity or entities providing equity or security for the Award together with an explanation of the legal relationship among the legal entities.
4. If the Eligible Entity is a wholly or jointly owned subsidiary of an electric cooperative, the Eligible Entity must provide a balance sheet and income statement of each of its members.

d. Financial assistance

1. Identify the type and amount of financial assistance described in Section B.5 of the NOFO that the entity will seek in its Application if it receives an Invitation to Proceed. If the Eligible Entity intends to seek a combination of the types of financial assistance listed in Section B.5, it must state the amount it intends to seek for each type of financial assistance.
 2. Identify other federal funding sources that will be leveraged for this project.
- e. Disclose if any foreign entity or foreign person has an ownership interest, voting interest, management rights, or an equity interest in the Eligible Entity or any rights in the proposed Project(s).
- f. Estimate the proposed GHG reduction from the Portfolio of Actions as provided in Section A.4. of the NOFO. The Eligible Entity must provide the proposed amount of GHG emissions reductions that will result from the implementation of its proposed Project(s). This will be completed by using the RUS Achievable Reductions Tool (ART) or submission of comparable data. A template of the ART tool is available on the New ERA website ([Empowering Rural America New ERA Program | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/empowering-rural-america/new-era-program/rural-development)). The submission of comparable data may impact the Agency's timeline for review of the Application. Eligible Entities that choose to use other methods will need to demonstrate

that their method provides comparable information for the Agency to adequately estimate the reduction of GHG emissions reductions stemming from its proposed Portfolio of Actions. Include a narrative explaining how this program is enabling your coop to invest in additional GHG reducing measures that it otherwise would not have done.

- g. State the value of its Total Utility Plant (TUP) as of December 31, 2022.
- h. Provide a technical description of the Project(s) it intends to finance if it receives an Award.

The technical description must include the following:

1. A description of the Project(s) to be funded under this notice, types of funding being requested, and the anticipated amounts for such funding.
 2. A description of other actions related to the Project(s), but not funded by this proposal, that will allow the Eligible Entity to reduce its total GHG emissions (*e.g.*, fuel switching to lower GHG-emitting sources).
 3. A description of the Portfolio of Actions (not exceeding 1,500 words) including a summary of the technical aspects of the various actions that will allow RUS to measure the reduction of GHG emissions resulting from the Portfolio of Actions.
 4. The amount of the GHG emissions reductions under the evaluation criteria as provided in (f) above.
 5. The Eligible Entity must also provide sufficient detail for RUS to determine that the Portfolio of Actions satisfies the technical requirements for this program and is consistent with industry standards and prudent utility practices.
- i. Timeline. Provide a timeline estimate for the project execution within the statutory deadline. Include project milestones such as: engineering studies, securing sites, interconnection approval, permits, environmental requirements, construction commencing, supply chain delay buffers, and when the Project will be operational. Include as milestones all documents that are requested by the Application but will not be ready in time for the Application deadline.

[Name of the Eligible Entity] understands RUS reserves the right to ask Eligible Entities for clarifying information on, or additional information or documentation related to, the LOI.

If invited to apply to the New ERA program by receipt of an Invitation to Proceed, **[Name of**

the Eligible Entity] commits to developing a proposal that achieves the greatest reductions in GHG emissions in a way that promotes resiliency and reliability for rural electric systems and affordability for their members. **[Name of the Eligible Entity]** agrees to comply with the requirements of the New ERA program as outlined in the NOFO.

Lastly, **[Name of the Eligible Entity]** commits to immediately notify RUS in writing should it decide to withdraw from consideration for New ERA Program funding before submitting the complete application.

Sincerely,

[Manager/ CEO of the Eligible Entity]

Address/Contact Information