

Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIP) Overview and Enrolment Orientation

Questions and Answers

Definitions

1. Can you explain which one is a fuel station and a distribution.

ANSWER: A transportation fueling facility would be a fueling station, convenience store, hypermarket fueling station, fleet facility, and similar entities with capital investments. A fuel distribution facility would be a terminal operation, depot, midstream partner, or similarly equivalent operation.

Project Eligibility

1. Is there any consideration on hydrogen fuels as part of this funding opportunity?

ANSWER: No, HBIIP only assists projects related to higher blends of ethanol (greater than 10%) and/or biodiesel (greater than 5%).

2. If it's a new build would a E100 tank qualify for blending?

ANSWER: As a fuel distribution facility, if the E100 tank is used to offer higher blends of ethanol (greater than 10%) it would be eligible. New tanks at a transportation fueling facility would not be eligible.

3. Does a Biodiesel facility with additional marine terminal qualify for this funding opportunity?

ANSWER: If the facility is implementing activities related to higher blends of ethanol (greater than 10%) and/or biodiesel (greater than 5%).

4. If there is a distribution location that needs a tank to store 20% RD and 80% BD, can that receive grant money?

ANSWER: Eligible project costs would be those related to the installation, and/or retrofitting, and/or otherwise upgrading of fuel dispensers/pump, related/attached equipment, fuel storage tank system components, and other infrastructure required at a location to ensure the environmentally safe availability of fuel containing ethanol blends greater than 10% or fuel containing biodiesel blends greater than 5%. See Notice of Funding Opportunity, Section III.B.

5. For 1 fueling facility, can we apply for both E85 and B20 infrastructure funding?

ANSWER: Yes, applications can include implementation activities for both higher blends of ethanol (greater than 10%) and biodiesel (greater than 5%).

6. For a Fuel Distribution Facility, are new tank builds covered?

ANSWER: For a new fuel distribution facility, fuel storage tanks related to the higher blends of ethanol (greater than 10%) and/or biodiesel (greater than 5%) would be eligible.

7. For terminals, can an existing tanks be fixed to allow biodiesel or ethanol blends? Would this be considered used by USDA's definition?

ANSWER: Existing or used equipment would need to be refurbished in order to be eligible.

8. Can we apply for 1 existing fueling facility funding and 1 NEW fueling facility funding?

ANSWER: Yes, an application can include multiple locations, including a mix of both new and existing locations.

9. Tanks for fueling facilities are funded at 50%. What about fuel distribution facilities?

ANSWER: Fuel storage tanks for fuel distribution facilities could be eligible for up to 50% grant funding.

10. Are above ground storage tanks (ASTs) eligible? Most documentation of this grant references USTs.

ANSWER: Yes, Above Ground Storage Tanks are eligible.

11. Are there different funding amounts for New Fueling Facilities?

ANSWER: New transportation fueling facilities are only eligible for assistance related to fuel dispensers and related ancillary equipment.

System Access

1. What if we went through the EAUTH process in 2020?

ANSWER: We recommend logging into the USDA eAuthentication link and verify the Level 2 is still valid. If it has expired, it can be updated through the website or by contacting one of the members of the HBIIP team.

2. If you have an existing HBIIP account for a previous award, what steps do you follow to request application for a new project?

ANSWER: Ensure the SAM.gov (UEI) registration is active, that all users who need access have a Level 2 eAuth account, then submit the access request to have a new application generated.

3. Do you need to wait for your UEI from sam.gov before you can do the USDA eAuthentication?

ANSWER: No, these are independent systems. You can obtain Level 2 eAuth access while waiting for the UEI to be registered.

Application

1. Where is the example tech report?

ANSWER: The sample technical report can be found at this link - https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SAMPLE_TECHNICAL_REPORT_2022.pdf.

2. SF 424D -Assurances for Construction programs - link also appears to be incomplete.

ANSWER: Form SF 424D, Assurances - Construction Programs, is required to be submitted with an application. You can find the form here - <https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SF424D-V1.1.pdf>. Depending on the browser used, the form may need to be downloaded to be viewed.

Matching Funds

1. Does certification of funds refer to total project costs or only project costs?

ANSWER: Matching funds and the certification of funds need to cover all eligible project costs.

2. Does certification of funds refer to total project costs or only the amount of the grant request?

ANSWER: Matching funds and the certification of funds need to cover all eligible project costs.

Priority Points

1. Can you elaborate on the Consideration for Geographical Diversity?

ANSWER: A Consideration for Geographical Diversity will be given transportation fueling facility applicants that are: 1) located in the Western States (states west of the Mississippi River); 2) located in the New England States; 3) located along an interstate corridor (within 1 mile of an interstate corridor and easily accessible and visible); and 4) a sole station (no transportation fueling facilities within a one-mile radius of the facility location).

2. Does priority scoring only apply to refueling facilities or also to terminal projects?

ANSWER: Priority scoring is only applicable to transportation fueling facility applicants.

3. For fuel distribution facilities, would Key Priorities be based on the location of the facility or the customers the facility serves? For example, what if the facility serves customers in a Key Priority area?

ANSWER: We recommend the application include documentation supporting consideration.

Environmental Review

1. Should we also submit our environmental checklist to the State USDA Energy Coordinator in addition to the email address provided in the solicitation (higherblendgrants-access@usda.gov)?

ANSWER: Preliminary Environmental Information Surveys should be submitted to the HigherBlendsGrants-access@usda.gov email address. They will be sent to State Energy Coordinators from our side.

2. The HBIIIP guidance suggests that we reach out directly to the State USDA Energy Coordinator, to discuss environmental requirements. Should we still do this prior to applying?

ANSWER: Yes, we would recommend this.

3. The Single Points of contact list is from 2020 on the USDA.GOV site, is this still active or is there a new Single Points of contact list for 2022?

ANSWER: The Single Point of Contact list was updated and can be found at https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SPOC-List_4-13-2020.pdf. This is the most current version of the list.

Reporting

1. What is the term held if approved for the HBIIIP program? How long are you under a "contract" to offer a higher blend fuel under this program? What is that term?

ANSWER: This program required five years of annual reporting once a project is completed.