



Community Engagement Grant Program Policy

Board of Directors- September 16, 2026



Community Engagement Grant Program

- Power Ahead Colorado's community engagement work is anchored by its grant program, through which \$2.2 million will be distributed over the next three years to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to increase accessibility and understanding of Power Ahead Colorado programs.
- The grant program will be informed by a Community Advisory Group (CAG) made up of representatives with geographically diverse and strong networks; kicked off in July.
- The grant program is expected to go live September 21.
- Year one of the sub-grantee awards will total around \$500,000.

Community Advisory Group input

- General appreciation for focus on accessibility in initial draft.
- Use (even) plain(er) language wherever possible.
- Include examples and templates wherever possible.
- Ensure clarity of grant program purpose.
- Emphasize community relationships in scoring and include a community leader as a reviewer if possible.
- Insurance and other federal requirements may be a barrier.

Community Advisory Group input

- Be transparent and realistic about time needed for application.
- Remove or combine even possibly redundant questions.
- Eliminate technical barriers (e.g. requiring EnviroScreen reference).
- Clearly distinguish required, optional, scored, and post-award materials.
- Get specific about community reach: lived experience, involvement in decision-making, compensation, valuing community knowledge.

Grant program goals

- 1) Support the Power Ahead Colorado mission: “***Power better homes, stronger communities, and quality jobs for Colorado’s clean, healthy future.***”
- 2) Increase awareness of Power Ahead Colorado program areas, focused on:
 - i. General education related to heat pumps, electrification, efficiency, and related topics.
 - ii. Workforce development.
 - iii. Incentives.
- 3) Cover a diverse geographic area reflective of the 59 participating member governments.

Internal goal: Increase accessibility for prospective grantees and remove barriers for underserved communities

Meeting the internal goal

- Reducing administrative burden where possible.
- Offering individualized technical assistance at the award stage.
- Promoting teaming.
- Offering readable and accessible resources (e.g., templates).
- Providing example grant activities, with sample budgets.
- Providing Spanish translation of core grant materials (e.g., application, recorded info sessions).
- Offering milestone-based payments.

Grant solicitation

- Introduces Power Ahead Colorado Programs and where this grant program fits within, including what potential activities are and what a competitive proposal would include.
- Grants will be disbursed all at same time to a 'cohort' which will include voluntary cohort co-learning activities.
- Subaward amounts will range from \$15,000 for less labor-intensive engagement activities up to \$100,000 for broader engagement activities that may require more time, coordination, staffing, or resources to carry out.

Grant solicitation (continued)

- Eligibility is generally 501(c)(3) orgs that are able to conduct community engagement within or across any of DRCOG's 59 municipalities. Partnerships and teaming is encouraged.
- Proposals should serve communities experiencing greater environmental, economic, or health burdens and applicants may demonstrate these burdens in community knowledge, lived experience, local data, Colorado EnviroScreen, or other relevant information.
- Grant cycles will be 13 months.

Category	Description	Scoring Weight
Community Context & Opportunity	How clearly the applicant describes the community, identifies target populations (especially disproportionately impacted communities and property owners), and explains the opportunity to increase awareness of Power Ahead Colorado programs. Consider whether the project addresses real barriers or information gaps.	10%
Outreach & Engagement Approach	Quality and appropriateness of the proposed outreach, education, and awareness activities. Consider whether activities are culturally appropriate, accessible, realistic, and likely to increase reach of the intended audiences.	20%
Community Reach & Relationships	Applicant's ability to effectively reach the proposed audience. Considering existing community relationships, demonstrated trust, partnerships, geographic coverage, and likelihood of engaging, intended audiences.	25%
Project Feasibility & Budget	Whether the proposed activities are realistic within the grant period and supported by a clear implementation plan. Evaluates whether the budget is reasonable, aligned with the proposed activities, and demonstrates responsible stewardship of grant funds.	25%
Organizational Capacity & Qualifications	Applicant's experience and capacity to carry out the proposed work. Considers staff experience, organizational strengths, partnerships, and prior experience serving similar communities.	15%
Partnering & Teaming	Awarded to proposals that include a formal teaming arrangement with another eligible organization(s)	5%

Grant application

- Application requirements include:
 - Completed web application (approx. 28 questions).
 - Representations & Certifications – signed form.
 - Budget Worksheet (template provided).
- Application period open for approx. 35 days.
- Application will be a web portal and will offer informational materials:
 - Recorded virtual Q&A session.
 - Recorded tutorial on web application.
 - Recorded webinar.

Grant support

- Finalists will be informed/supported on the following*:
 - Teaming advantage in scoring rubric
 - Potential brief interview – to verbally share about their project and background
 - Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) (one-time free registration in federal portal, support provided to complete this)**
 - Adequate insurance; some coverages may not be applicable in certain cases; 1-pager will explain requirements and how to ensure adequate coverage*
 - Pre-award eligibility and readiness review – contract requirement that confirms the application information and assesses applicant's ability to meet the program's financial, administrative, insurance, reporting, and other grant requirements

**K&W will be providing technical assistance on these requirements in group settings*

Grant support (continued)

- Sub-awardees will be supported with the following:
 - Regular reporting with support from Kearns and West.
 - Workplan.
 - Minor monthly progress bulleted lists.
 - One or two more substantive reports depending on length of project (EPA requirement).
 - Periodic check-ins – either individual or as cohort.

Questions?

Recommended motion:

Move to approve the Power Ahead Colorado Community Engagement Grant Program Policy.