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# Community Energy Champion (CEC) Program

Program Guidelines  
Version 3.3  
June 2023

CEC Program resources available at:

[IESO website - CEC](#)

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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 CEC Program is to support First Nation and Métis Communities, and First Nation and Métis Organizations in planning, implementing and evaluating energy-related priorities by providing funding support for:

- Hiring a designated community energy champion (“CEC”) within their community or organization; and
- Expenses such as equipment, training, engagement, or travel related to the work of the CEC.

## 3. 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. Joint applications for a shared single project may be submitted by two or more eligible applicants. Applicant eligibility for the CEC Program is determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the IESO or the Ministry of Energy, as applicable.

Please see section 6 below for definitions of key eligibility terms.

### b. Eligible Projects and Funding

All applications to the CEC Program must fit within one of the following CEC Program streams described below. Applicants may submit a single application for funding under one or both of these streams, subject to the maximum amount of funding per stream as set out below, up to an aggregate maximum funding amount of \$195,000 per application.

Stream	Maximum Funding Amount and Term
<b>CEC Salary</b>	Up to \$55,000 per year for three (3) years Or Up to \$60,000 per year for three (3) years, if applicants apply for and are approved for the Additional Qualification Top Up of \$5,000 per year, provided, in each case, adequate progress is being made, as determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the IESO.
<b>CEC Expense</b>	Up to \$15,000 per Application

While all applicants are encouraged to have identified a CEC candidate at the application stage, in order to be eligible for funding under the CEC Program:

- Applicants that have applied for the Additional Qualification Top Up are required to have (i) identified a CEC candidate at the application stage and (ii) hired a CEC prior to the execution of a Funding Agreement; and
- Applicants that have **not** applied for the Additional Qualification Top Up are required to have hired a CEC prior to the execution of a Funding Agreement.

Applicants that apply for the Additional Qualification Top Up must complete and submit Appendix C: Additional Qualification Information as part of their CEC Program application.

**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. Please note that in-kind contributions (if any) are not reimbursable under the CEC Program.

**Eligible Expenses**

Under the CEC Program, Eligible Expenses will include:

- Salary, wages and benefits, contributions, assessments and taxes associated with employing a CEC, inclusive of any Additional Qualification Top Up;
- Relevant training costs for the CEC; and
- Costs for related materials, equipment, travel, products and services that are required to carry out the work of the CEC.

## Ineligible Expenses

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

- Costs that are not directly related to the work of the CEC;
- Costs for which funding was received in relation to the work of the CEC from another source;
- Costs that the applicant or joint applicant(s) did not directly incur;
- 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 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 deliverables, including the supporting documentation required by the Funding Agreement, or other evidence of payment satisfactory to 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 activities, work plan, budget, or timelines; and
- Costs in respect of HST.

## 4. Application Process

### a. Background

The CEC 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 CEC Program, applicants should review these CEC Program Guidelines and the Funding Agreement carefully, and are encouraged to seek independent legal and other professional advice, as needed.

The CEC Program application development process is supportive. Applicants should contact CEC Program staff with any questions at [cec@ieso.ca](mailto:cec@ieso.ca). CEC 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 [cec@ieso.ca](mailto:cec@ieso.ca). Please refer to Appendix A for additional details

regarding the application process and evaluation timelines. Applicants are encouraged to contact CEC Program staff prior to submitting an application.

## 5. Application Evaluation

Applications that meet the completeness and eligibility requirements of the CEC 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 CEC 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 CEC Program application review criteria outlined immediately below:

Review Criteria	Description
<b>Strategic fit</b>	Will the CEC enhance First Nation or Métis energy-related capacity and leadership?
<b>Community benefit, need, and support</b>	How would a CEC benefit the community? Is there an identified need for a CEC? Has a document expressing community support (Band Council Resolution, board resolution, etc.) been included in the application?
<b>Job description / incumbent qualifications</b>	Is the job description sufficiently detailed and appropriate within the context of the purpose and intended outcome? If an incumbent CEC has been selected, does the incumbent have the skills and experience to successfully meet the purpose and intended outcomes? Where the Additional Qualification Top Up has been requested, does the description express how the particular eligible qualification(s) of the identified CEC candidate will serve as valuable for the purpose and intended outcomes?
<b>Financial feasibility</b>	Is the budget for a CEC detailed, reasonable and justified? Have revenue sources for costs outside of those assigned to the CEC Program funding been identified and secured?
<b>Project purpose and outcomes</b>	Are the purpose and intended outcomes clearly articulated? Is the plan to realize and evaluate the outcomes of hiring a CEC sufficiently detailed and reasonable?

## 6. Key Definitions

Key Term	Description
<p><b>Additional Qualification Top Up</b></p>	<p>means the additional funding of \$5,000 per year that successful applicants may be eligible for under the CEC Program in respect of Eligible Expenses for salary, wages and benefits, contributions, assessments and taxes associated with employing a CEC, where the CEC has one or more of the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian Institute of Energy Training (CIET) Certified Energy Manager (CEM);</li> <li>• CIET Certified Energy Auditor (CEA);</li> <li>• Successful completion of Indigenous Clean Energy 20/20 Catalyst Program; or</li> <li>• Any other certifications or qualifications that may be considered as eligible by the IESO, in its sole and absolute discretion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>First Nation or Métis Community</b></p>	<p>means, for the purposes of the CEC Program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a First Nation in Ontario that is a “band” as defined in the <i>Indian Act</i> (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> </ol>
<p><b>First Nation or Métis Organization</b></p>	<p>means, for the purposes of the CEC 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.</p>
<p><b>Funding Agreement</b></p>	<p>means the agreement that successful applicants must sign in order to be eligible to receive funding under the CEC Program.</p>

## 8. General

- a. Receipt of an application to the CEC 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 CEC 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 CEC 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 CEC Program does not create a relationship of principal and agent or employer and employee between the IESO and the CEC. 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 and their participation in the CEC Program, 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 CEC 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 CEC Program in any year; and
  2. revise the CEC 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:CEC@ieso.ca">CEC@ieso.ca</a></p>
Step 2: Application Submission	<p>Submit your application to <a href="mailto:CEC@ieso.ca">CEC@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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