



**New Jersey Economic Development Authority  
Offshore Wind Applied Research Administration Grant Challenge  
NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA” or Authority”) will begin accepting applications for the competitive Offshore Wind (“OSW”) Applied Research Administration Grant Challenge pilot (“Grant Challenge”) on **Monday, November 4, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. EST.**

Applications will be accepted during a competitive application round through the Grant Challenge’s application portal, which will close on **Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EST.** There will be no application fee for this Grant Challenge.

The application can be accessed at: <https://www.njeda.gov/oswgrantchallenge/>.

**Purpose and Overview**

The Grant Challenge will make available one (1) grant of \$6,350,000 to an eligible nonprofit entity as a Grant Administrator (“Administrator”) to develop and autonomously manage a Sub-Grant Program available to New Jersey universities and colleges to conduct offshore wind related applied research and tech transfer activities over a five-year period.

The Sub-Grant Program will leverage the deep OSW expertise and capacity for tech transfer at New Jersey’s higher education institutions and help commercialize technologies and innovative solutions that establish the State as a national leader in Offshore Wind Industry. The Grant Challenge will be awarded to the applicant with the highest overall score based on the scoring criteria detailed below.

**Funding for the Challenge Grant**

The Grant Challenge will utilize \$6,350,000 of the \$10 million received through grant agreements with the New Jersey Department of Treasury for Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations. The funds consist of \$2,204,632 provisioned through the Treasury Agreement dated February 24, 2023, and a total of \$4,145,368 provisioned through the Treasury Agreement dated February 26, 2024, and deposited into the Economic Recovery Fund (“ERF”).

The \$6,350,000 award amount is based upon current information about funding availability.

NJEDA reserves the right to increase that amount, should additional funding become available.

### **Eligible Administrator Applicants**

Eligible Administrator Applicants are non-profit entities with direct experience overseeing and administering a minimum of one (1) prior offshore wind research and development (“R&D”) solicitation. Universities and colleges located in New Jersey are **not eligible** to apply for the Grant Challenge, as they are the eligible primary applicant pool for awards through the Sub-Grant Program.

In addition, Administrator Applicants must be in substantial good standing with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (“NJLW”) and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (“NJDEP”) at the time of approval. Administrator Applicants are required to provide a current tax clearance certificate when the grant agreement is executed to demonstrate they are in good standing with the New Jersey Division of Taxation and properly registered to do business in New Jersey, unless the Administrator Applicants are not required to register with the Division of Taxation.

### **Eligible Uses of Funding**

Eligible uses of grant funding include:

- Costs incurred by the Administrator for:
  - Planning, developing, and managing competitive solicitations for the Sub-Grant Program
  - Scoring and awarding proposals received for the Sub-Grant Program.
  - Managing awards through the Sub-Grant Program, including legal agreements, compliance, data, milestones, and budgets, and reporting to NJEDA.
- Costs for the Sub-Grant awards, which will cover research-related expenses incurred by New Jersey universities or colleges awarded through the Sub-Grant Program.

Any expenditures that do not comply with the above will be required to be returned by the Administrator to NJEDA at the end of the Grant Agreement term.

The following additional stipulations and restrictions are also applicable for the Grant Challenge funding:

#### For the Grant Administrator

- **No more than twelve percent (12%) of the grant, or \$762,200 of the \$6,350,000 funding available, can be used for the Administrator’s direct and indirect costs. The remaining eighty-eight percent (88%) of the grant, or \$5,588,000, must go to awardees of the Sub-Grant Program. Should the applicant propose an Administrator direct and indirect cost less than 12%, the remaining funding will be allocated for the Sub-Grant Program.**
- The Administrator **cannot** use its funding for capital costs.
- Staff from New Jersey universities or colleges who have applied for a Sub-Grant

Program solicitation may not participate in the proposal evaluation committee(s) for that particular solicitation and the Administrator must ensure any other conflicts of interest are mitigated for the funding awarded through the Sub-Grant Program.

- Within thirty (30) calendar days after the Grant Challenge grant agreement term expires, any unspent funds or disallowed costs must be returned by the Administrator to NJEDA.

#### For the Sub-Grantee

- NJEDA will **not** require tax clearance or due diligence checks with other New Jersey agencies for Sub-Grant awardees.
- Capital costs are allowable costs for research projects awarded through the Sub-Grant Program. Sub-Grantees who identify capital costs as an expected use of funding will be required to acknowledge as part of their application for the Sub-Grant Program that they will be subject to New Jersey labor compliance laws and regulations, including New Jersey affirmative action and prevailing wage, and New Jersey Contractor Registration and that they may be audited.
- Research project proposals submitted for the Sub-Grant Program must at a minimum:
  - Focus on one or more of the following research priority areas:
    - Climate-smart modeling for high performance wind farms;
    - Technological solutions for environmental impact assessments;
    - OSW transmission and grid integration;
    - Power-to-X and energy storage solutions;
    - OSW component design; and/or
    - other OSW research priority areas subject to approval by NJEDA staff.
  - Demonstrate a connection to potential commercialization or innovation in technology, construction and operations practices, or other practices that advance OSW development.
  - Include a holistic timeline for the research project that does not exceed a period of three years and is no less than three months from project start to end.
  - Include a budget proposal that features clearly defined payment milestones tied to the requested Sub-Grant award amount. The budget milestones must include specific research activities and outcomes throughout the duration of the project with specific verification method(s) outlined to confirm the milestone has been met.
  - Agree to present and share research data and findings with the NJEDA at least once annually while the research project is active, excluding any information that is or will be protected as intellectual property.
  - Submit completed research to be featured on the Research with New Jersey website at: [www.researchwithnj.com](http://www.researchwithnj.com).

#### **Proposal Scope**

As part of the application, Eligible Administrator Applicants must submit proposals that outline compelling plans to successfully accomplish the following:

1. Solicitation Development and Management
  - a) Draft Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”) for the Sub-Grant Program, stipulating

solicitation scope of work, timelines, project eligibility criteria, scoring and evaluation factors, and other key information.

- i. Scoring and evaluation factors must include preference for research projects conducted in collaboration between two or more New Jersey universities and/or colleges.
  - ii. Indirect costs for Sub-grant awards must cap at 12% of the awarded amount.
- b) Advertise the Sub-Grant Program solicitations, once public, to New Jersey colleges and universities.
  - c) Run a minimum of two (2) competitive solicitations to their Sub-Grant Program within five (5) years of receiving the Grant Challenge award and host informational webinars or other activities to ensure prospective applicants are aware of the solicitation opportunity.
  - d) Respond to Sub-Grant Program application inquiries as appropriate via email and/or through an established questions and answer process during the open proposal submission period. Administrator will develop a “frequently asked questions” document or other supports as needed to facilitate applicants.

## 2. Scoring and Award Selection

- a) Perform quality control checks on all proposals received for the Sub-Grant Program to ensure that all submitted proposals meet the minimum requirements for consideration and all required documentation has been provided.
- b) Organize and facilitate scoring committee(s) for each solicitation topic area. The scoring committee will consist of subject matter and technical experts in the relevant fields. The Administrator will collect confidentiality agreements from each scorer and establish timelines for scoring to be completed; upon completion, the Administrator will rank proposals by averaging each scoring committee expert’s score.
- c) Establish a process to select and award the top-scoring proposals.
- d) Integrate processes and protocols to ensure bias and conflicts of interest are mitigated for the scoring and selection of Sub-Grant Program awards.
- e) Provide NJEDA with access to all data associated with project proposals.

## 3. Project Management

- a) Manage contract negotiations and enter into contracts with Sub-Grant Program award recipients.
- b) Assign members of its staff to manage project awards, keep track of progress against project milestones and deliverables, and process payments.
- c) Responsible for the review and payment of invoices for the Sub-Grant Program and ensuring they comply with the Grant Challenge terms and conditions.
- d) Submit quarterly reports to the Authority detailing Administrator’s use of grant funds, including the Administrator’s direct and indirect costs as well as disbursement of Sub-Grant funds and any associated deliverables submitted by the Sub-Grantees.
- e) For each Sub-Grant research project, Administrator will form an industry advisory board comprised of at least three (3) subject matter experts who can support its commercialization.
- f) Conduct monthly check-ins with project award recipients and maintain a public project dashboard on a website that details key project information.

- g) Coordinate with Sub-Grant Program award recipients to provide an annual presentation on research projects and research findings to NJEDA and relevant stakeholders.
- h) Conduct regular check-ins with NJEDA to provide program updates.

Administrators must provide a detailed Administration Budget using the budget template included within the Grant Challenge application materials. The Administration budget should clearly define any proposed direct and indirect costs. (Please see Application Scoring section below)

### **Administrator Application Submission and Review Process**

Applications will be accepted during a competitive application process through the program's online application portal, which will be open from **Monday, November 4, 2024 at 10 a.m. EST to Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EST**. All interested applicants must complete and submit their applications online through this portal by the deadline to be considered for the Grant Challenge award.

After the application window has closed, NJEDA staff will review all applications for completeness and compliance with required documentation and minimum requirements. Following the completeness review, applicants with missing or incomplete documentation, or requiring additional clarification, will receive an email notification from NJEDA and will have ten (10) business days to cure any deficiencies or provide any needed clarifications, including, but not limited to, submitting any missing or requested documentation.

After the ten (10) business days, any application that is not complete or for which clarification has not been provided, will be deemed incomplete and will not be evaluated or scored. All complete and compliant applications will be evaluated, scored, and ranked by an Evaluation Committee comprised of NJEDA staff.

### **Scoring of Applications**

Applications will be reviewed and scored by an evaluation scoring committee comprised of Authority staff. Applications will be scored on a scale of 1-100 points, with the minimum score required to be considered for an award is 80 points. Applicants whose applications are declined will have the right to appeal within the time period set in the declination letter. All declinations recommended by NJEDA staff that are based on discretionary reasons will be brought to the NJEDA Board for approval.

The Evaluation Committee will review, score, and rank applications based on the following four (4) Scoring Criteria:

1. Experience developing and administering research solicitations for offshore wind. (Up to **40 points as allocated under the following (a) and (b) subcategories**):

- a) Possess substantive experience administering R&D competitive funding solicitations to advance OSW technology. (Up to **20 Points**)
    - Comprehensive experience and clear ability to execute. (15-20 Points)
    - Moderate experience and ability to execute. (8-14 Points)
    - Minimal experience and ability to execute. (1-7 Points)
    - No experience and evidence of ability to execute. (0 Points)
  - b) Detail a compelling and impactful concept for developing a new Sub-Grant Program for New Jersey colleges and universities to conduct applied research that has the potential for commercialization or innovation in technology, construction and operations practices, or other practices that advance offshore wind development in New Jersey. (Up to **20 points**)
    - Comprehensive experience and clear ability to execute. (15-20 Points)
    - Moderate experience and ability to execute. (8-14 Points)
    - Minimal experience and ability to execute. (1-7 Points)
    - No experience and evidence of ability to execute. (0 Points)
2. Approach for engaging subject matter and technical experts to score and select research proposals. (Up to **20 points**)
- a) Plan for organizing and facilitating scoring committee(s) consisting of subject matter and technical experts to review proposals received for the Sub-Grant Program. (Up to **10 points**).
  - b) Plan for engaging with the OSW industry and subject matter experts to analyze the commercial impact of research projects. (Up to **5 points**)
  - c) Outline a clear strategy for leveraging subject matter experts to align technology innovators, research institutions, project developers, supply chain companies, utilities, government agencies, and other stakeholders towards common R&D objectives. (Up to **5 points**)
3. Approach for project management of research grant awards. (Up to **30 points**)
- a) Describe a clear and realistic approach to administratively manage contracts, budgets, and disbursements with Sub-Grant Program awardees. (Up to **15 points**)
  - b) Establish robust technical supports for Sub-Grant Program awardees throughout the duration of each research project. (Up to **5 points**)
  - c) Detail a process for tracking Sub-Grant Program research projects against project milestones and deliverables. (Up to **5 points**)
  - d) Detail a clear process for reporting Sub-Grant Program data and outcomes to NJEDA. (Up to **5 points**)
4. Administration Budget. (Up to **10 points**)
- a) Provides a realistic Administration Budget. Administrators must provide a detailed Administration Budget using the budget template included within the Grant

Challenge application materials. The budget should clearly define any proposed direct and indirect costs for the Administrator. (Up to **10 points**)

### **Grant Amount**

One (1) grant in the amount of \$6,350,000 will be awarded for the Grant Challenge.

### **Grant Agreement and Disbursement of Grant Funds**

The Authority will enter into a Grant Agreement solely with the approved Administrator who will be responsible for assuring the compliance of the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement.

Following execution of the Grant Agreement, NJEDA will provide a disbursement equal to the agreed upon amount for the Administrator's direct and indirect costs. The remaining balance will be disbursed upon the launch of each Sub-Grant Program solicitation, with the disbursement amount equal to the total funding made available through each respective Sub-Grant Program solicitation.

As discussed above under "Eligible Uses of Funding", any grant expenditures that do not comply with the specified eligible uses of the Grant Challenge funding will be required to be returned to the Authority at the end of the Grant Agreement term.

### **Fees**

No application fees will be charged for this program.

### **Additional Requirements and Information**

Comprehensive information about OSW Applied Research Grant Challenge is available at <https://www.njeda.gov/oswgrantchallenge/>

Questions regarding the Grant Challenge may be submitted via email to [WindInstitute@njeda.gov](mailto:WindInstitute@njeda.gov) by **Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EST** with the subject line "Questions OSW Applied Research Grant Challenge". NJEDA will post answers on the OSW Applied Research Grant Challenge website by **Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EST**. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to check the OSW Applied Research Grant Challenge website prior to submission of the application.**

Funding for this grant is subject to State and Federal statutes including, but not limited to, the following, which may impact affiliates: N.J.S.A. 52:32-60.1, et seq., which prevents the New Jersey government entities from certain dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Belarus or Russia; Compliance with the list of "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons" promulgated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov>; N.J.S.A. 24:6I-49 which provides that the following are not eligible for most State or local economic incentives (a) a person or entity issued a license to operate

as a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or that employs a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and (b) a property owner, developer, or operator of a project to be used, in whole or in part, by or to benefit a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or to employ a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12, et seq., which prohibits a member of the Legislature or a State officer or employee or their partners or a corporation in which they owns or controls more than 1% of the stock to undertake or execute any contract, agreement, sale, or purchase of \$25.00 or more, made, entered into, awarded or granted by any State agency, with certain limited exceptions including grant awards by the New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology.