

IES PROGRAM FAQ'S

1. What is the Connecticut Innovative Energy Solutions (IES) Program?

a. The Connecticut Innovative Energy Solutions (IES) Program is a regulatory sandbox designed to identify, pilot, and scale innovative ideas that enable a decarbonized, affordable, and equitable electric grid for Connecticut. We are seeking innovative ideas across the clean energy landscape that can help realize an equitable modern electric grid in Connecticut.

2. Who operates the IES Program?

a. The IES program is operated by the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA or the Authority) with Strategen as Program Administrator and support from the Innovation Advisory Council (IAC). The IAC is comprised of a diverse and representative set of clean energy stakeholders in Connecticut. The IAC does not have formal decision-making responsibilities but provides recommendations and guidance to the Authority through key stages of the IES program cycle.

3. Who is eligible to apply?

a. Both Connecticut-based and out-of-state innovators offering innovative electric grid products, services, programs that are ready to be tested and have the potential to provide wide-spread benefits to the grid and ratepayers.

4. What funding amount is available for projects that are approved for the IES program?

a. The first IES program cycle has a budget of \$25 million for the first year with a limit of \$5 million available for any single pilot initiative. The \$5 million maximum potential award to any pilot project is a lifetime cap. The receipt of this funding will be subject to the achievement of key project milestones, which will be determined ahead of project deployment, collaboratively by the applicant and the Authority.

5. How can I submit a proposal?

a. Phase 1 concept proposals may be submitted via the online portal submission form in the Apply Now page. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a more detailed proposal in Phase 2.

6. What types of projects are considered in scope?

a. The types of projects that fall under the IES Program should generally fit within the cycle's key themes and comply with the following project eligibility criteria:

- i. Customer benefit and protection: Projects must demonstrate a reasonable prospect of providing clear benefits to consumers, whether through long-term economic efficiencies, improvement in cost performance, enhancements to service, or other forms of benefits.
- ii. Relevance: The project must relate to the delivery of electricity services in Connecticut.
- iii. Innovation: The project must involve testing a new product, program, tariff, service, or business model that is not widely used in Connecticut and is conducive to scaling, replication, or serving as a potential model for others to adopt or deploy. An inventory of existing programs can be found [here](#).
- iv. Readiness: The applicant must demonstrate their preparation and readiness for testing their innovation in a live environment. Testing plans must be well developed and have clear objectives and measures. The tools and resources required to enable pilot testing must be in place.
- v. True regulatory barrier (to access temporary exemption): For projects seeking temporary relief from a regulatory requirement, applicants must articulate the regulatory requirement(s) that may be at issue for the project moving forward, and propose specific modifications to the requirement(s) that would allow the project to move forward.

7. What can I expect if my project gets selected?

a. Upon final project selection, innovators will be provided with approximately 12 to 18 months to launch projects and collect data on project performance. Following project deployment, innovators will be required to develop and submit a final report discussing project performance and lessons learned. Successful projects that demonstrate readiness to scale following the assessment phase will be invited to submit the appropriate regulatory application to do so.

8. What are the different participation pathways?

a. **Innovator**: An Innovator refers to an applicant who is a product owner or entity that is not a utility in Connecticut. Innovator-led projects are anticipated to focus on innovative approaches or mechanisms to maximize flexibility of the electric grid. Innovator-led projects cannot directly affect grid infrastructure owned and operated by the EDCs.

- a. **Electric Distribution Company (EDC):** EDC-led projects are expected to focus on innovative customer programs and/or tariff structures. Illustrative examples of EDC-led projects could be the prototyping of an advanced critical peak pricing tariff for commercial customers or the development of a “bring your own device” program to enhance demand-side flexibility.
- b. **Collaborative Partnership:** This pathway is for innovators seeking to partner with the Connecticut EDCs. A key goal of the IES Program is to create sufficient conditions for impactful collaborative engagements between cutting-edge technology companies and the EDCs. The EDCs have developed Preferred Focus Areas for product types and Market Outreach Plans to facilitate partnerships. Collaborative partnerships should be developed directly by the Innovator and the EDC and reflected in IES Program applications.