

Net Zero Energy Wastewater Treatment Program FAQs

What does the NZEWTP program fund?

The Net Zero Energy Wastewater Treatment Program (NZEWTP) funds project costs related to maximizing energy efficiency and self-generation aimed at reaching energy neutral operations at wastewater treatment facilities. In addition, NZEWTP grants will also help defray a portion of the costs associated with measurement and verification, and educational displays and signage.

Can we seek funding for only renewable energy systems?

Yes. Applicant must demonstrate that energy efficiency upgrade opportunities have been aggressively pursued and the renewable energy system(s) will allow the WWTP to operate as a site net zero energy facility.

What is the program's definition of site net zero energy?

Over the course of 12 months, the energy used by the wastewater treatment plant on site must be offset by the energy generated on site.

Can we use ESCOs?

Yes. You can enter into an agreement with an Energy Service Company to help you meet your energy goals.

Can new wastewater treatment plants apply?

Yes. Program is available to any eligible wastewater treatment plant.

How long will the grant application process take?

Once you have submitted the Pre-Proposal Application, the process is expected to take 4 months or longer.

How does the grant application process work?

1. Once you have a facility-wide energy plan with a roadmap for achieving site net zero energy operation that has official approval, you can apply for funding.
2. To start the grant application process, you must submit a Pre-Proposal Application during one of the competitive grant cycles. The Foundation will notify you within 2 months of your submission with a status update on your application. Some applicants will be invited to submit a Full Proposal (FP) while others may be declined.
3. Applicants selected to proceed in the grant application process will be invited to submit a FP. Foundation staff will work with you to determine how to proceed in the application process. You will be asked to provide additional information specific to the project(s) for which you are seeking funding. In addition, you will need to submit documentation and specification for educational displays and signage as well as plans for performance measurement and verification.

The project(s) must be ready to proceed with construction, if a grant is awarded.

How will the grant be paid?

NZEWTP program grants will be paid upon successful project installation, operation and achievement of performance goals as outlined in the grant agreement.

Can I apply for a new grant if my current grant is still active?

Yes. Your active grant and new grant application can overlap.

Are displays and signage eligible for grant funding?

Yes. An essential component of the Foundation's NZE program is education. Projects seeking Foundation support should showcase their efforts to reach NZE operation of the WWTP. 2.5% percent of the grant can be used toward this purpose. Use it or lose it.

Does project ownership affect eligibility?

Yes. In order to be eligible for funding, the project has to be 100% owned by an eligible applicant.

Why do I need to retire the environmental attributes for my project?

Environmental attributes (also called green tags, RECS, emission offsets, etc.) can be sold. However, when you sell the environmental attributes from your project, you can no longer claim the associated environmental benefits. The benefits now belong to buyer. Foundation-funded projects may not sell their environmental attributes so they can retain the associated environmental benefit for themselves.

Grant Reporting

If you are awarded a grant, the full reporting requirements will be outlined in the grant agreement. You will be required to provide the Foundation with updates throughout the project. An Interim Report must be submitted six months after the grant has been awarded.

What is the IDNR Information Request Form?

If your project includes wind turbines and/or ground mounted solar arrays, you must submit an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Information Request Form form with your Pre-Proposal Application. Please go to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' [EcoCat](#) website, enter your project information, and EcoCat will generate a 1-2 page Information Request Form with the inquiry results. This form will tell you about your project's potential adverse impacts on natural areas, wetlands and endangered species. Complete this as early as possible, in case your project will require a full consultation with IDNR.