

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT) EVID RFP: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

ARDOT (also referred to as the Department) hosted two October (2023) EVID RFP webinars to share information about the Arkansas EVID Program and funding opportunity for NEVI compliant EV chargers with the public. ARDOT received questions on the EVID RFP during the webinars as well as via email to nevi@ardot.gov. ARDOT has compiled the questions received to date, sorted them into five broad categories, and provided answers. Duplicative questions were consolidated for brevity. The five broad categories of EVID RFP questions received were:

- A. Site Plan Submittal and EVSE Components Questions
- B. NEVI Formula Program and ARDOT EVID Program Questions
- C. Eligibility Questions
- D. RFP Evaluation Process and Reimbursement Questions

Answers to questions received under each category are detailed in the corresponding sections below.

A. SITE PLAN SUBMITTAL AND EVSE COMPONENTS QUESTIONS

1. Can ARDOT confirm if proposers may install charging infrastructure for all weight classes (light duty, medium duty, heavy duty) or is ARDOT only looking for Light-duty infrastructure?

ANSWER: *ARDOT will accept proposals for EV charging stations for all vehicle weight classes, as long as EV charging stations are fully accessible to the public, including light-duty passenger vehicles (i.e., ARDOT will not consider fleet or truck stop only EV charging station designs in this first procurement round). ARDOT has included project innovations and future-proofing as an evaluation category, which can include projects that propose more future-proofed site designs such as “pull through” EV charging stations allowing for larger vehicle access as well as passenger vehicles (see [Form EVID-07, page 11](#)).*

2. Can ARDOT define wayfinding in the eligible project costs section?

ANSWER: *According to FHWA’s guidance, wayfinding signage is an eligible cost for NEVI funding reimbursement if costs “are directly related to the charging of an electric vehicle (EV).” Costs considered directly related to charging of vehicles include “signage to direct EVs to the charging station or provide information to EV users about use of the charging stations. This includes costs of new public EV charging stations, as well as upgrades to existing EV charging stations.”*

Signage on private property, meeting the eligible cost definitions above, may be submitted in the proposal with sufficient detail for ARDOT review and evaluation. Signage on ARDOT’s public right of way must be coordinated with the

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Department and follow all aspects of state and federal signage statutes. For federal statutes on signage see the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*, published by the FHWA under [23 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\), Part 655, Subpart F](#). Also see *Highway Beautification* at [23 CFR part 750](#) for additional requirements about traffic control devices and on-premises signs.

3. Is site design and layout required to meet U.S. Access Board recommendations for accessible EV charging stations?

ANSWER: *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 requirements apply to NEVI funded projects. According to FHWA: “EV charging stations must comply with ADA and Section 504 requirements and be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs or other assistive equipment. Key considerations include safety and ease of use. Specifically, designs for EV charging stations should ensure adequate space for exiting and entering the vehicle, unobstructed access to the EV charging stations, free movement around the EV charging stations and connection point on the vehicle, and clear paths and close proximity to any building entrances. The existing ADA standards address many aspects of accessibility for buildings and sites applicable to EV charging stations but do not specifically address EV charging stations. To address this gap, in July 2022 and further updated in July 2023, the U.S. Access Board issued [Design Recommendations for Accessible Electric Vehicle Charging Stations](#). FHWA recommends that charging stations be designed and constructed according to the Access Board’s Recommendations to demonstrate ADA compliance and optimize usability for persons with disabilities.”*

4. Will covered parking canopies for EV charging be held to the same ARDOT regulations as fueling station canopies?

ANSWER: *No. Federal and State laws do not currently specify standards for canopies over EV Charging stations. If a proposer is seeking to include canopies, the proposal should provide sufficient detail on the design, dimensions, and types of vehicles accommodated by the canopy covering the EV charging station. Canopies are not required by ARDOT but are an eligible cost for reimbursement under the program. As an optional addition to the site, ARDOT will evaluate proposals inclusive of canopies under the “Future Proofing and Innovation Criteria.” Proposers must also coordinate and comply with all local jurisdictional zoning regulations for height restrictions and other codes related to canopies.*

5. Can ARDOT clarify if additional connectors or ports beyond the minimum standards are preferred or required? If so, are these eligible expenses?

ANSWER: *Additional numbers of connectors (i.e., more than the minimum required four ports) and additional types of connectors (e.g., NACS in addition to CCS), are not required by ARDOT’s EVID Program but are optional elements*

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eligible for reimbursement with NEVI Formula Program funds. As optional additions, ARDOT will evaluate proposed additional connectors under the "Future Proofing and Innovation Criteria."

6. Regarding lighting requirements, can ARDOT clarify whether existing lighting at a site is sufficient or if additional lighting will need to be included as part of the EV installation?

ANSWER: ARDOT's [Form EVID-02](#) requires that "Adequate site lighting shall be considered during site planning." If the current lighting on the site is adequate to provide lighting of the EV charging station site, sufficient for customer usability and for purposes of safety and vandalism prevention, the proposer should include a description of the existing lighting adequacy in the proposal to provide ARDOT evaluation committee sufficient evidence to assess claims. If lightning is not adequate, proposers may include lighting as part of proposed eligible project costs.

7. Does ARDOT have specific stencils and signage to be used to meet the parking space requirements listed under site planning?

ANSWER: ARDOT does not have any specific stencils or signage the Department will issue. Any pavement markings or stencils to designate parking spaces supporting NEVI funded EV charging stations are eligible project costs but are the responsibility of the proposers in terms of design, details, and implementation.

8. Please consider allowing the outdoor electrical equipment to be NEMA 3R rated. This is the standard rating for outdoor electrical enclosures.

ANSWER: ARDOT will consider reasonable requests for exceptions to the EVID Program Requirements ([Form EVID-02](#)) as part of the exception request process detailed in [EVID Program Requirements Exception Request \(Form EVID-12\)](#). To be considered, please document an exception request and provide a justification through [EVID Program Requirements Exception Request \(Form EVID-12\)](#).

9. Can the required video security surveillance system be cloud based or is a DVR required at each site?

ANSWER: Yes, ARDOT's goal is to have security surveillance footage securely stored and accessible for review upon request to ensure user safety and prevent equipment vandalism. Costs to provide such surveillance are eligible for reimbursement. If other accommodations or exceptions are required, ARDOT will consider reasonable requests for exceptions to the EVID Program Requirements ([Form EVID-02](#)) as part of the exception request process detailed in [EVID Program Requirements Exception Request \(Form EVID-12\)](#).

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10. Please define commercial pedestal as referenced in EVID -02. Clarification is necessary to understand if this is referring to the construction of walls or fencing to hide unit-strut-built equipment racks.

ANSWER: EVID -02 is not intended to require construction of walls or fencing to hide unit-strut-built equipment racks. Form [EVID-02](#) states: "For placement of distribution cabinets and electrical equipment ensure local codes are followed." Form EVID-02 further recommends "Rather than wall-mounted (unit-strut) applications, consider commercial pedestals to house equipment including the meter, distribution panel, potential transformers, current transformers, etc." If other accommodations or exceptions are required, ARDOT will consider reasonable requests for exceptions to the EVID Program Requirements ([Form EVID-02](#)) as part of the exception request process detailed in [EVID Program Requirements Exception Request \(Form EVID-12\)](#).

11. Please define on-site water system.

For purposes of the [Site Plan and Design Information Coversheet \(Form EVID-08\)](#), "on-site water systems" are defined as water utilities, sewer utilities, and onsite irrigation systems that the proposed EV charging station installation will disrupt or interfere with as part of the project (e.g. if trenching for electrical utilities will interfere with underground, on-site water systems).

B. NEVI FORMULA PROGRAM AND ARDOT EVID PROGRAM

1. Will ARDOT consider awarding funding to sites that meet all requirements but that do NOT fall within AR's priority gap areas? Are sites located within the blue polygons of Figure 2. Arkansas NEVI Compliant EV Charging Station Gap Map eligible to apply?

ANSWER: ARDOT is not limiting projects only to the 11 EV service gaps. All projects on EV AFCs will be considered and are eligible for NEVI funding. However, ARDOT's priority is to complete all NEVI requirements to fully build out the state's AFC system.

2. Will there only be one awardee per charging gap?

ANSWER: NEVI Formula Program funding will be used to fund EV charging infrastructure proposals that (1) meet all Federal NEVI and ARDOT EVID Program Requirements and (2) are located on designated EV AFC Corridors. The Program will initially focus on building out the gaps on the state's AFCs as defined in the RFP and FHWA approved 2023 EVID Plan. However, if ARDOT deems a need for additional redundancy on the AFC system, and a qualified, highly responsive evaluated proposal meets that need, ARDOT reserves the right to fund more than one EV charging station per charging gap.

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3. Do proposers need to have the site location to be eligible for approval?

ANSWER: Yes, proposers must clearly identify the project location and site, as well as submit the [Preliminary Site Agreement \(Form EVID-05\)](#) with their complete submission packet.

4. Will Arkansas offer a partner list sign-up for site hosts, EVSE vendors, construction companies, etc.?

ANSWER: ARDOT does not currently offer a partner sign-up list. If the Department decides to provide a partner sign up list in the future, such a list will be fully advertised on the [ardot.gov/NEVI](#) site and publicized through the Department's typical public announcement processes and channels.

5. Can ARDOT confirm how much funding is available during this round?

ANSWER: Arkansas will receive \$54 million in total NEVI formula funds over five years, under IIJA, to create an EV charging network across the state. With the approval of ARDOT's first NEVI EVID plan in September of 2022, the Department received access to the federal fiscal year (FY) 22 – 23 NEVI formula funding totaling \$19.5M. In October 2023, as well as each following program year, ARDOT anticipates FHWA approval of its annual NEVI EVID plan update, which will add an additional ~\$11.5M in new funding each program year through FY 2026.

C. ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

1. Is Sales Tax an eligible cost?

ANSWER: Yes. If a proposer is seeking reimbursement of sales tax, include all taxes in the proposed project budget.

2. Is AR State Parks eligible for this funding yet?

ANSWER: ARDOT is limiting eligible proposals to only to private entities to comply with 23 CFR 635.112(e) which states: "Except in the case of a concession agreement, as defined in section 710.703 of this title, no public agency shall be permitted to bid in competition or to enter into subcontracts with private contractors." Public entities may still be site hosts, however, public entities may not be project proposers/owner-operators.

Once ARDOT has been certified by FHWA as fully built out under NEVI requirements, the state will have more discretionary ability to award any remaining NEVI Formula funding and may consider widening eligibility to public entities in those future discretionary procurement rounds.

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3. Please clarify what will be considered recurring business costs such as staffing, as stated in ineligible costs.

ANSWER: *Eligible costs for the Operating and Maintenance (O&M) phase includes costs for up to five years after charging station is operational, limited strictly to the following three categories:*

- i. *Charging equipment lease fees (if proposer chooses lease option for charging equipment rather than purchase option). The lease costs are only eligible if paid through a fixed contract.*
- ii. *Cellular network fees, internet service fees, or similar fees/costs for EV charging station data sharing. This includes, to the extent practicable, costs related to the specific data sharing requirements of this program as well as costs of data sharing on all chargers and charging activities on the EV network funded by this program. Networking costs are only eligible if paid through a fixed contract.*
- iii. *Hardware and software maintenance and repair costs, including service agreements with third-party contractors, charging equipment manufacturers, warrantors, or aftermarket providers. Hardware and software maintenance and repair costs are only eligible if paid through a fixed contract.*

Ineligible costs for the O&M period include variable EV charging station operating and maintenance costs not defined in the categories above, including costs for electricity, insurance, and other recurring business costs such as staffing.

4. Will debt financing be considered an eligible cost for reimbursement?

ANSWER: *ARDOT and other state DOT's across the nation have requested additional clarification on this question from FHWA. More detailed guidance has not yet been provided, but is expected to be published in the future. See current references to debt financing under the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Standards and Requirements, [23 CFR Part 680.106 \(m\)](#).*

D. RFP EVALUATION PROCESS & REIMBURSEMENT QUESTIONS

1. How will ARDOT be evaluating and awarding proposals? Is there an evaluation rubric or will all 10 sections of Form EVID-07 be considered equally? Will ARDOT be providing a scoring rubric?

ANSWER: *ARDOT will evaluate proposals based on responsiveness to criteria outlined in Form [EVID-07](#), on a scale of whether the submitted proposal details are “non-responsive” to “highly responsive” to evaluation criteria. [Form EVID-07](#) is considered the evaluation rubric. The ten criteria in Form EVID-07 will be evaluated at equal weight.*

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2. Is ARDOT awarding applicants based on total funds requested/grant ask or total project budget?

ANSWER: ARDOT will award funding based on specific funding requested in the [Project Budget \(Form EVID-09\)](#).

3. Is there a page limit for Form EVID-07?

ANSWER: Form EVID-07 is locked and limited to the visible text box space, with font locked at 11 point. If additional proposal information is required, proposers may label additional information in the naming format outlined in the RFP and upload it through the submission portal with the proposal packet. ARDOT is not obligated to review any additional materials submitted.

4. For early completeness review, where should proposal materials be submitted?

ANSWER: Proposals shall be submitted via the online submission portal available at: www.ardot.gov/nevi by October 27, 2023, for early completeness review as defined in the RFP.

5. Is there a specific naming of files required for submission through the portal?

ANSWER: Yes, please see the RFP page 17 "APPENDIX I: PROPOSAL CHECKLIST AND INSTRUCTIONS" for details on file naming conventions.

6. If an organization would like to comment on contractual language, should we submit our comments with our proposal, or after awards?

ANSWER: Please submit comments on the draft contractual language via email to nevi@ardot.gov.

7. Would it be possible to get the EVID Forms in word documents?

ANSWER: ARDOT has created editable PDFs to ensure all proposers submit the same common core of submittal materials. If additional proposal information is required, proposers may label additional information in the naming format outlined in the RFP and upload it through the submission portal with the proposal packet. ARDOT is not obligated to review any additional materials submitted.

8. How would you like the supporting documents for each form to be submitted? .zip or cloud based link?

ANSWER: Please see RFP page 18 "APPENDIX I: PROPOSAL CHECKLIST AND INSTRUCTIONS" for details on file naming conventions and file formats for additional supporting documentation. Supporting materials shall be submitted via the online submission portal available at: www.ardot.gov/nevi. ARDOT is not obligated to review any additional materials submitted.

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9. Will we be able to see a list of proposers once they have submitted the forms?

ANSWER: ARDOT will follow all state and federal laws in the disclosure of proposal materials. Proposers will only be disclosed after all proposal evaluations and awards from this funding round have been finalized.

10. In the Financial Requirements Documentation Coversheet Form EVID-10, can ARDOT give an example of what financial Institution Letter would be acceptable to submit?

ANSWER: If demonstration of a Credit Rating from a Credit Agency listed in Table 1 of Form EVID-10 is not feasible, a Proposer can submit a letter from a financial institution documenting they have deposits (e.g., certificates of deposit), or funding available from a line of credit (LoC), or a loan in an amount at least equal to the total cost of the Proposal. The financial institution shall be an entity whose operations are regulated and examined by a U.S. Federal or State agency.

11. If we are proposing for multiple sites, does ARDOT want all documents per site combined into one PDF proposal, or does ARDOT want the documents separated and submitted per site? How would ARDOT like the proposer to prepare and submit these documents?

ANSWER: Each unique site must have a unique set of required submittal materials (i.e., each site proposed must comprise a single proposal with the submittal materials separated). Each EVID form will need its own PDF to be submitted per proposal. There is no limit on the number of sites and corresponding number of proposals that may be submitted.

12. Is there a specific format/requirement for the project schedule?

ANSWER: No. Proposers may provide a schedule in the format that best provides ARDOT's evaluation committee with information on the proposed project schedule.

13. Are any bonds required to be submitted with our bid?

ANSWER: No. Proof of surety bonds are required before execution of the final contract (i.e., after NTP 1 and before NTP 2). However, documentation of surety costs for Project development are eligible reimbursable expenses and can be indicated in the Project Budget ([Form EVID-09](#)).

14. Can ARDOT provide clarity on whether a separate Budget Narrative should be attached to the Project Budget (Form EVID-09) or if completion of Table 1 and 2 is sufficient to address the Budget Narrative?

ANSWER: Proposers are required to submit the Project Budget ([Form EVID-09](#)) as well complete the project cost effectiveness narrative in Form [EVID-07](#). If additional budget information is necessary, proposers may label

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additional information in the naming format outlined and upload it through the submission portal with the proposal packet.

E. REIMBURSEMENT QUESTIONS

1. Does ARDOT intend to withhold any part of the 80% reimbursement through the end of the 5-year agreement period?

ANSWER: No. ARDOT will not withhold any funding from the procurement and construction phase of the project for performance-based payments at the end of the five-year agreement period.

2. What is the frequency Awardees may submit invoices/expenses to ARDOT?

ANSWER: Following issuance of appropriate formal notices from ARDOT, Awardees may submit invoices and reimbursement requests at least every 90 days but no more than 30 days to ARDOT for all final purchase and construction costs. Reimbursements for five-year Operations and Maintenance project phases may be submitted to ARDOT bi-annually (every six months) with appropriate documentation. Please see [Guidelines for Implementation of the NEVI Formula Program](#) page 4 “Operations and Maintenance” and “Invoice Review & Funding Disbursement” for reimbursement details.

3. Can a proposer be reimbursed for existing charging stations already installed as long as they meet all of the requirements? Can a proposer be reimbursed for already installed preconstruction materials for the EV chargers such as conduit, mounting hardware, upgraded transformers?

ANSWER: No. Awardees may only be reimbursed on eligible project costs occurring during the formal project period and after formal ARDOT notices (NTP 1, NTP 2, and NOA).

4. In the request for proposals, it states that “The Awardee shall be responsible for the state administrative costs that are beyond what is retained.” Can ARDOT please explain how it will calculate administrative costs, as well as what any additional costs may be, and provide a rate sheet for such activity?

ANSWER: ARDOT will retain 7% of the total awarded Federal funds from the NEVI Formula Program for administrative costs. This is calculated by multiplying the total awarded Federal funds for the project by 7%. The Department will retain that amount by deducting it from the NEVI Formula Program award. ARDOT will use this portion of federal funding for all administrative aspects of the project, including staff time for managing the preconstruction and construction phases, as well as administration of the required five-year O&M, reporting, and project close out phases. The 7% retained is the 80% Federal match for the anticipated administrative costs.

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The Awardee will be required to provide the 20% non-Federal match for the anticipated administrative costs as a deposit to ARDOT before initiating the project. This is calculated by dividing the retained administrative costs described in the paragraph above by 80% and then multiplying it by 20%. The NEVI Formula Program is a Federal-aid Program and an 80% Federal and 20% non-Federal cost share is required.

The anticipated administrative costs described above are automatically calculated in the Project Budget ([Form EVID-09](#)), Table 2, Item Nos. 3 and 4, based on information entered into the other portions of the form. Example calculations are shown below.

- **Item No. 1** = \$800,000 (Requested Federal Share)
- **Item No. 2** = \$200,000 (Proposed Awardee Share)
- **Item No. 3** = $\$800,000 \times 7\% = \$56,000$ (Retained by ARDOT from Item No. 1 for administrative costs)
- **Item No. 4** = $(\$56,000/80\%) \times 20\% = \$14,000$ (Deposited to ARDOT before project initiation)
- **Item No. 5** = $\$800,000 - \$56,000 = \$744,000$ (Federal Share available for reimbursement)

ARDOT will track all administrative costs, and bill for those costs under existing staff classifications and approved rates. As a new program, ARDOT intends the initial administrative costs calculated and detailed in the Project Budget ([Form EVID-09](#)) to be sufficient to conduct all administration. If, based on Department accounting, ARDOT project administrative costs scale beyond these initial costs, ARDOT will inform awardees in writing and provide a description and rationale for additional administration costs.

As a new program, it is possible that ARDOT administrative costs could scale if aspects of the project involve greater than anticipated staff time, such as lengthy environmental clearance (NEPA) processes, or non-performance in the preconstruction, construction, and/or O&M phases of the project requiring unanticipated, additional, and sustained Department administrative management.

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