



Government of Western Australia
Energy Policy WA

Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy Grants Program

Guidelines

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Working together for a **brighter** energy future.

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Program Guidelines 2022-23*

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Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ECP	Expert Consumer Panel
The Guidelines	The Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy Grants Program Guidelines 2021-22
WA ACE	Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy

1. Background

The energy sector in Western Australia exists to provide electricity and gas to consumers. It is central to energy production and delivery that the long-term interests of energy consumers are served.

While some large energy consumers have the capacity to influence policy and infrastructure investment decisions, smaller consumers face greater barriers to inclusion in informed, constructive debate about energy use. Given the critical role and impact energy has on households and small businesses, overcoming these barriers to enable the views of consumers to be heard is essential to improving and maintaining an effective energy sector.

In response to this need, Energy Policy WA co-ordinates and supports consumer advocacy through the Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy (WA ACE) Program. The WA ACE Program seeks to upskill consumers and consumer advocates, facilitate stronger relationships with the sector and helps to build the State's energy consumer representation in the longer term.

The WA ACE Forum provides broad based representation of household and small business consumer views in a central forum, allowing issues to be raised and for consumers to share in the development of products and solutions for the energy sector.

The Expert Consumer Panel (ECP) has been established to assist consumers (including consumer representatives) in developing sufficient understanding of the energy sector to enable thorough and considered contributions to public consultations and rulemaking processes, through a coordinated and managed co-learning environment.

The WA ACE Grants complement these measures by distributing the remaining allocated funds.

These Guidelines provide information about the intent, structure and application processes for the WA ACE Grants Program.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the WA ACE Grants Program is to:

- support energy advocacy activities;
- build knowledge and capacity of energy consumer advocates; and
- promote solution-focused consumer-centric research in the energy sector;

that benefit the long-term interests of energy consumers in Western Australia.

3. Program overview

The WA ACE Grants support household and small business energy consumer advocacy in Western Australia.

The WA ACE Grant Guidelines are maintained by Energy Policy WA based on input from the WA ACE Forum, consumers and the energy sector to enable the delivery of the grants program that responds to contemporary consumer and sector issues.

The WA ACE Grants Program includes three different grants streams:

- Open Grants
- Identified Project Grants
- Small Grants

Open Grants allow applicants to develop and propose their own project to achieve consumer outcomes in the energy sector. Identified Project Grants identify advocacy areas that require support, allowing applicants to develop a proposal which addresses an established need. Small Grants provide funding for individuals who wish to conduct research to respond to an energy sector consultation process or support the development of a position paper or other feedback to improve energy consumer outcomes. Further details of the three streams can be found in the following section.

Applications for all WA ACE Grants can be made by Western Australian based organisations on a per-project basis. All project outputs will be made available on the Energy Policy WA website and presented to the WA ACE Forum. Reusable project outputs are to be provided without logos.

Details of previous project outputs and applications are available on the Energy Policy WA website.

3.1 Stream details

The WA ACE Grants Program funding is distributed through Open Grants, Identified Project Grants and Small Grants. These streams are summarised in the table below:

Grant type	Open Grants	Identified Project Grants	Small Grants
Purpose	Funds projects that support energy-related advocacy activities; build knowledge and capacity of energy consumer advocates; or promote solutions-focused customer-centric research in the energy sector		Supports contributions to energy-related consultations or development of position papers to address an existing energy issue
Determining Authority	Applications are assessed by an independent panel who make a recommendation to the Minister for Energy for determination.		Applications are assessed and determined by the Coordinator of Energy
Application timeframes	Two rounds per financial year – See Round Details for closing and decision dates		Applications can be made at any time with results provided within 15 days
Funding limit per grant (ex GST)	See Round Details		\$10,000
Details, including selection criteria	These Guidelines and the Round Details		WA ACE Grants – Small Grants Criteria

Table 1: Summary of Stream information

Further details on each stream follows.

3.1.1 Open Grants

Open Grants allow applicants to develop projects that address an identified need to improve energy consumer outcomes.

Applicants must ensure their proposal considers the objectives and priority areas identified in the [Round Details](#), but are free to suggest the specific area of focus.

An independent panel will consider applications with reference to these Guidelines and make recommendations to the Western Australian Minister for Energy for final determination. The [Round Details](#) contain grant round opening, closing and indicative decision dates.

See [Section 4: Criteria](#) for eligibility and selection criteria.

3.1.2 Identified Project Grants

Identified Project Grants allow applicants to utilise developed project frameworks to assist in supporting a preidentified area of need. Proposed project frameworks are provided with the [Round Details](#).

Applicants can develop a proposal either within the suggested framework, or in an alternative format that achieves a consistent outcome. All proposals are to be considerate of the objectives and priority areas for the round.

The project frameworks provided identify key information which can assist applicants in developing their approach to the topic. Information provided can be used to pre-fill applications.

An independent panel will consider applications with reference to these Guidelines and make recommendations to the Western Australian Minister for Energy for final determination. The [Round Details](#) contain grant round opening, closing and indicative decision dates.

See [Section 4: Criteria](#) for eligibility and selection criteria.

3.1.3 Small Grants

Small Grants support independent, consumer-focused contributions to technical energy-related consultations, reviews, reform processes or rule making processes across the energy sector, including but not limited to contributions to the development of the Wholesale Electricity Market Rules, Gas Services Information Rules, Pilbara Network Rules and consumer protection instruments.

Small Grants are also available to support consumer contributions in addressing energy issues outside of a consultation process. Funding can be sought to research and develop proposals that promote solutions-focused consumer outcomes.

Small Grants will be assessed by a panel who make a recommendation to the Coordinator of Energy for determination within 15 business days. Small Grant applications can be made at any time.

For further details on the Small Grants, including selection criteria and application and assessment processes, please refer to the document [Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy – Small Grants Criteria](#).

3.2 Round details

[Round Details](#) will be released as each WA ACE Grant Round is launched. The Round Details outline the grant round opening, closing and indicative decision dates, and will contain priority areas and identified projects, as developed in consultation with the WA ACE Forum, consumers and the energy sector.

The priority areas identified in the Round Details provide guidance on contemporary energy consumer issues that require input to ensure long-term consumer outcomes are achieved. It is not essential that a grant application address a priority area, so long as rationale for the project and its potential impact on consumer advocacy is provided.

3.2.1 Funding available

Funding for each grant round is limited. Refer to the [Round Details](#) for the maximum grant amounts and total available funds for each Round.

4. Criteria

WA ACE Grant applications for Open and Identified Project Grants will be considered for eligibility and assessed based on the outlined selection criteria. For the Small Grants section criteria, refer to the [Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy – Small Grants Criteria](#).

WA ACE Grants will be awarded to projects that meet the objectives of the program; are outcomes focused; timely and cost-effective.

Applicants are advised to carefully consider the eligibility and selection criteria before developing a project application. Background information outlining the extent of the problem and/or consumer detriment should be provided, along with an explanation of the positive impact this project will have.

4.1 Eligibility criteria

All applications for Open and Identified Project Grants must meet the following eligibility criteria to be eligible for funding. Applicants can submit more than one application in each funding round.

E1 Completed applications must be submitted on the application form to epwa-grants@dmirs.wa.gov.au prior to the closing date and time of the grants round. Late applications will not be accepted.

E2 Applicants must be a Western Australian based organisation.

E3 Applicants must outline a project plan with completion scheduled within 12 months following a successful application.

E4 Applications must be signed by the chief executive officer or authorised officer of the applicant's organisation.

E5 Applications must include a presentation to the WA ACE Forum in their scope.

All applications must demonstrate they achieve at least one of the following objectives to be eligible for funding:

E6 Support energy advocacy activities in Western Australia;

E7 Build knowledge and capacity of energy consumer advocates in Western Australia; or

E8 Promote solution-focused consumer-centric research in the energy sector.

The application must highlight which of these objectives are being met and will be assessed against the following:

The project proposal demonstrates:

E0.1 How the proposed research or solution (such as a change to policy, regulation or practices) will benefit consumers; and/or

E0.2 How the project will build the capacity of household and small business consumers and/or consumer advocates; and/or

E0.3 How the project may empower household and small business consumers; and/or

E0.4 How the project will influence decision makers; and/or

E0.5 How the project will inform or support advocacy.

The project proposal demonstrates benefits to consumers by outlining:

E0.6 The size of the consumer class impacted; and

E0.7 The potential to improve the situation of these consumers; and

E0.8 The potential reach of information or findings.

4.2 Ineligible projects

The following projects will not be considered eligible for funding:

- Consumer awareness campaigns or advertising.
- Development of commercial products.
- Projects that reflect work already being undertaken by Government or Government Trading Enterprises.

4.3 Selection criteria

Set out below are the selection criteria against which all applications for Open and Identified Project Grants will be assessed. For Small Grants' selection criteria please refer to the document [Western Australian Advocacy for Consumers of Energy – Small Grants Criteria](#).

For a project proposal to be considered for a grant, it must meet most of the criteria. The criteria are not ranked, for example compliance with criterion four as important as compliance with criterion one.

Criteria	Measures for assessment against the criteria
S1. Alignment with WA ACE Grants priority areas OR for other areas of research, why the work is a priority and the material impact on household and small business consumers.	S1.1 Clarity of objectives of planned project
	S1.2 Alignment with grant priority areas
	S1.3 If not aligned, the strength of the rationale made by applicant that the work is a priority (see S1.3.1 to S1.3.3)
	S1.3.1 Has the applicant adequately explained the extent of the problem and/or consumer detriment?
	S1.3.2 Has the applicant provided information on the material impact of the project on the targeted consumers?
S2. Builds capacity for future advocacy a) Demonstrates value to consumer organisations b) Demonstrates value to the sector	S2.1 Capacity of the organisation to deliver project outcome(s)
	S2.2 Organisation's expertise (or potential to acquire)
	S2.3 Organisation's network – capacity to build new and/or leverage existing partnerships/coalitions with advocates/decision makers

Criteria	Measures for assessment against the criteria
	<p>S2.4 Project methodology and proposed outputs will deliver/contribute to achievement of outcomes</p>
	<p>S.2.5 Capacity and mechanisms to share project findings/learnings with WA ACE Forum and other advocates</p>
<p>S3. Relevance to the Western Australian energy sector</p>	<p>S3.1 Correct and concise identification of potential influencers and decision-makers, as well as the forums/opportunities to disseminate project findings or partnerships with advocates to facilitate dissemination of project findings</p>
	<p>S3.2 Extent to which the proposal seeks to work within the Western Australian context</p>
	<p>S3.3 Solution-focused nature of the project (see S3.3.1 to 3.3.3)</p>
	<p>S3.3.1 Has the applicant proposed to investigate a solution?</p>
	<p>S3.3.2 If the applicant has sought to investigate an issue, has the applicant demonstrated that other research has not addressed the issue in the Western Australian context?</p>
	<p>S3.3.3 If building on earlier research in the Western Australian context, has the applicant strongly justified that additional research is required before a solution can be developed?</p>
<p>S4. Offers value for money: the benefits should outweigh the costs, and costs should be prudent and minimised</p>	<p>S4.1 Budget demonstrates consideration of most effective and efficient way to achieve outcome</p>
	<p>S4.2 Methodology and budget appropriately aligned</p>
	<p>S4.3 Demonstrate that the grant funding does not constitute the entire financial base of the organisation</p>
<p>S5. Offers partnership opportunities with other organisations where possible</p>	<p>S5.1 Extent to which the applicant plans to build new and/or leverage existing partnerships/coalitions with advocates/decision makers</p>
<p>S6. Provides a viable project plan, outlining the intended outcomes and success indicators</p>	<p>S6.1 Soundness of organisation/project governance, management and organisational structures</p>
	<p>S6.2 Clarity of proposal outcomes</p>

Criteria	Measures for assessment against the criteria
	S6.3 Clarity of proposal timeframes
	S6.4 Quality of self-evaluation framework
	S6.5 Calibre and experience of key staff members
	S6.6 Quality of consultants (if applicable)
	S6.7 Applicant's track record

4.4 Application support

Applications should be concise and supporting information may be attached to the application form where relevant.

Applicants may be contacted for further information about an application to support its assessment.

Applicants seeking further information about the WA ACE Grants application process can contact Energy Policy WA via email at epwa-grants@dmirs.wa.gov.au. A three business day response time to queries is maintained.

Applicants seeking input on the relevance of their proposed works to Western Australian energy consumer advocacy can contact Consumer Advocacy at Energy Policy WA for input. Please note that Energy Policy WA cannot provide any guidance as to the potential success of an application.

5. Grant management

5.1 Applications

All applications are to be submitted via epwa-grants@dmirs.wa.gov.au. An email confirmation will be provided. If a confirmation email is not received, please contact Energy Policy WA via phone to confirm that your application has been received.

All organisations that apply for funding will be notified via email of the outcome of their submission. Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

Successful application forms will become part of the funding agreement. Grant conditions and management protocols will apply to successful projects.

5.2 Grant approval process

Energy Policy WA will appoint an independent, three-member panel to consider Open and Identified Project Grant applications with reference to these Guidelines. That panel will make a recommendation to the Western Australian Minister for Energy with secretariat support from Energy Policy WA. The Minister for Energy will make the final determination prior to announcement on the decision date. Decisions of the Minister for Energy are final.

Where an application is approved, the Grant Agreement will be formed utilising these Guidelines and the [Community Services Template – Grant Agreements](#) in line with the [Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy](#).

5.3 Grants management

Energy Policy WA is committed to a transparent, accountable and robust grants management framework.

To guarantee transparency and integrity, the WA ACE Grants Program is developed on the Australian National Audit Office's key principles of best practice grants administration guidance¹.

Energy Policy WA will publish all written reports and materials arising from a grant on its website, to ensure that all consumers can benefit from the work.

Funding agreements require all publications relating to the project to carry the following disclaimer:

"This project was funded by the Government of Western Australia (Energy Policy WA) as part of its grants process for consumer advocacy projects and research projects for the benefit of consumers of electricity and gas.

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Western Australia or Energy Policy WA."

Confidential information or information impacting privacy will be removed prior to publication.

Energy Policy WA reserves the right to have a third party assist with the administration of the WA ACE Grants Program.

Constructive feedback on the WA ACE Grants Program will guide future grants rounds and is welcomed. Applicants and potential applicants can submit feedback and complaints to Energy Policy WA via email at epwa-grants@dmirs.wa.gov.au.

All grant agreement information is subject to Freedom of Information provisions.

6. Review

The WA ACE Grants Guidelines will be reviewed annually by Energy Policy WA reflecting feedback of the WA ACE Forum, consumers, the independent assessment panel and the energy sector. The review will consider the objectives of the program, the effectiveness of the outcomes and the value to consumers of energy. The review will reflect the principles outlined in the Australian National Audit Office's best practice grants administration guidance.

The Minister for Energy may revise the Guidelines on the recommendation of Energy Policy WA. The ongoing funding of the WA ACE Grants will be subject to future State Budget deliberations. Energy Policy WA will provide advice into the budget process based on the reviews undertaken.

¹ Implementing Better Practice Grants Administration, Better Practice Guide, ANAO December 2013 <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-494730694/view>



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