



**TRIBAL SOLAR**  
**ACCELERATOR FUND**

GRID Alternatives

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# Tribal Energy Innovators Fellowship – Request for Applications

GRID Alternatives' Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund aims to catalyze the growth of solar energy and expand solar job opportunities in tribal communities across the United States.

## **Tribal Energy Innovators Fellowship (TEI)**

Tribal Energy Innovators Fellowship provide small grants and resources to federally recognized tribal members or tribal groups to support the development of innovative ideas and the use of problem-solving processes that lead to sustainable renewable energy solutions for a tribal community.

The 2021 Tribal Energy Innovators fellowship will enter its second year under the Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund. The TEI is designated for federally-recognized tribal members who are interested, invested, or engaged in work which supports renewable energy infrastructure and tribal energy capacity building in tribal communities.

GRID Alternatives and the TSAF has a wide range of tribal grantee partners, industry partners in the United States and in many international countries to provide a network of professional and educational support, networking opportunities with tribal energy leaders, industry leaders, and exposure to advanced technologies. As a Tribal Energy Innovator Fellow, you will receive a \$5,000 award to advance your ideas from January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021 while participating in regularly scheduled individual and cohort conference calls, and a culminating convening or presentation (TBD).

Tribal Energy Innovators Fellowship Priority:

- The TSAF will provide small grants and resources to federally recognized tribal members or tribal groups to support the development of innovative

ideas and the use of problem-solving processes that lead to sustainable renewable energy solutions for a tribal community.

Tribal Energy Innovation Fellowship Objective(s):

- To provide a modest fellowship award to plan and develop new solutions to tribal community renewable energy challenges.
- To engage the tribal community, make the most of existing assets, and work collaboratively with other tribal organizations.
- To learn from and be mentored by an industry professional on best practices in renewable energy for rural and underserved communities, business/enterprise models and planning, and other areas of technical support.

### **Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund (TSAF) Background:**

GRID Alternatives' National Tribal Program has worked since 2010 to help tribal communities across the United States achieve their renewable energy goals. Using a community-centric approach, we partner with tribes to identify, develop, finance and implement solar power projects that meet community needs, including education, hands-on training, and energy cost reductions for tribal members.

GRID Alternatives has a long-standing partnership with the Wells Fargo Foundation, which has supported the national expansion of GRID's renewable energy access work since 2012. In 2018, GRID Alternatives received a 3-year, \$5 million grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation to support GRID's National Tribal Program as well as provide new, independent funding to tribes for renewable energy projects. This concept and program scope was developed into what is now the Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund (TSAF). Our mission is to catalyze solar energy and expand solar job opportunities in tribal communities across the United States. Our vision for Indian Country is a transition to energy sovereignty that is educational, entrepreneurial, and completely renewable.

The TSAF is excited to share our mission, vision, and goals with tribal communities across Indian Country through grantmaking, engagement and communication, advocacy, technical assistance, collaboration, and a commitment to build capacity in tribal energy sovereignty.

### **Background information - TSAF Grantmaking 2018-2021:**

The broader goals of the TSAF is to support new tribal solar projects ranging from tribal facility buildings to single family homes or small multi-family complexes owned or rented by tribal members. Moreover, the TSAF established a partnership with the American Indian College Fund to support tribal college and university students with degree program interests in renewable energy. Please learn more at [www.tribalsolar.org](http://www.tribalsolar.org).

### **Tribal Energy Innovators Fellowship timeline and reporting**

RFP ANNOUNCEMENT	November 3, 2020
TEI INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR	November 19, 2020
FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION DUE	December 11, 2020 by 5:00 p.m. MST
AWARD/DENIAL NOTIFICATIONS	December 28, 2020
FELLOWSHIP TIMELINE (START/END)	January 1, 2021– June 30, 2021
INDIVIDUAL CHECK-IN'S WITH TSAF STAFF	Bi-monthly starting in January 2021
COHORT CHECK-IN'S WITH TSAF STAFF	Bi-monthly starting in February 2021
FELLOWSHIP PRESENTATION	June 30, 2021
FELLOWSHIP REPORT DUE	June 30, 2021

### **Expectations of fellowship participants**

If selected as a TEI participant, you will be expected to:

- Maintain monthly email communication with TSAF staff to provide updates
- Attend bi-monthly individual check-in meetings with TSAF staff and mentors
- Attend bi-monthly cohort check-in meetings with TSAF staff and mentors
- Present your fellowship goals and outcomes via virtual platform

### **Tribal Energy Innovators review and selection criteria**

Upon receipt of a TSAF-TEI application, the following fellowship criteria should be met:

- Solid and concrete matches between fellowship purpose and energy innovation
- Clear focus on building renewable energy infrastructure in a tribal community
- Demonstrated ability and/or experience necessary for a successful project
- Clear plan of action, including specific goals and measurable objectives and activities that align with a January 1, June 30 timeframe
- Budget narrative

- Partnerships that engage broad tribal community participation and support
- Potential for application and replication in other tribal communities

The TSAF will solicit knowledgeable, experienced tribal and non-tribal renewable energy professionals to conduct a review, scoring, and selection of TEI applications.

### **TEI Eligibility**

The TSAF is committed to serving, supporting, and strengthening American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribal communities by investing in solar energy development and sustainability.

The TSAF eligibility criteria is as follows:

- Federal and state-recognized tribal members in the lower 48 states and Alaska
- Must be 18 years of age and older
- Must commit to all fellowship requirements

### **TEI Fellowship Application Site and Submission Guidelines**

- Please download the TSAF application(s) in Microsoft Word at or google form at [www.tribalsolar.org](http://www.tribalsolar.org) or email [tclairmont@gridalternatives.org](mailto:tclairmont@gridalternatives.org) and cc [contact@tribalsolar.org](mailto:contact@tribalsolar.org) to request a TEI Fellowship application.
- The TSAF application must conform to the following requirements:
  - No more than 8 pages of application information and narrative questions section (including charts/graphs, maps, or photos). If application information and narrative questions section exceeds 8 pages, TSAF will only review and score the first 8 pages and disregard any additional pages.
  - TEI Application (if applying via Word document) must be saved and submitted as ONE Adobe PDF file
  - All pages must be formatted to fit on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with margins not less than one inch on every side. Use font size of 11 point or larger (except in figures or tables, which may be 10-point font). A symbol font may be used to insert tribal letters or special characters.

- References must be included as footnotes or endnotes in a font size of 10 or larger. Footnotes and endnotes are counted toward the maximum page requirement.
- **Page numbers and name of applicant must be included in the footer of every page (if applying via Word Document).**
- TEI applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications at least 24 hours in advance of the submission deadline.
  - TEI Applications are due Friday December 11, 2020 by 5:00 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (MST). No applications will be accepted after this date or time, no exceptions.
  - Please submit applications via email at [tclairmont@gridalternatives.org](mailto:tclairmont@gridalternatives.org) and “cc” [contact@tribalsolar.org](mailto:contact@tribalsolar.org) subject line “2021 TEI Application - <Applicant Name>.” In the body of the email please direct the salutation to: Tanksi Clairmont, TSAF Director.
  - Applicants may revise or update their application until the expiration of the applicable deadline.
  - All applications that pass eligibility and initial review will undergo a comprehensive review between December 11 – 28, 2020 and will be scored according to the criteria (7 sections) identified in the RFP.

### **TEI Funds Disbursement**

- Fellow must have a signed fellowship contract and W-9 by January 11, 2021
- Awards will be split into two payments of \$2500: first payment by February 1, 2021, and the second payment by June 1, 2021
- The second payment will be contingent on participation in all regularly scheduled check-ins calls.

### **TEI FAQ's**

Please monitor [www.tribalsolar.org](http://www.tribalsolar.org) for FAQ's