



# **Compensation Plan** for Community-based Organizations and Individual Community Members



APRIL 2024





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### Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

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The compensation plan was prepared following guides, best practices, and precedents set by governmental and nonprofit entities including Urban Institute, [“Equitable Compensation for Community Engagement Guidebook”](#); City of Golden, Colorado, [“Community Engagement Planning Guide”](#); Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, [“Equitable compensation for food policy council engagement”](#); and Oregon, Department of Transportation, Office of Social Equity, [“Equitable Engagement Compensation Program.”](#)

### About NEEP

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) was founded in 1996 as a non-profit whose mission is to serve the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic to accelerate regional collaboration to promote advanced energy efficiency and related solutions in home, buildings, industry, and communities. Our vision is that the region’s homes, buildings, and communities are transformed into efficient, affordable, low-carbon resilient places to live, work, and play.



## Purpose

The Compensation Plan is designed to recognize the significant contributions made by community-based organizations and individual community members participating in the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) Community-Driven Transportation Plan for the Northeast. This project serves communities in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut to develop community-based plans and create a replicable framework for developing, supporting, and advancing community-based clean transportation plans over the project period of April 2024 to March 2026.

NEEP and its partners will identify transportation needs and barriers in the targeted communities and will support the development of an implementation plan that will address those obstacles, integrating clean transportation components such as electric vehicles (EVs), plug-in electric vehicles, and electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE).

Informed by community insights through stakeholder advisory committee meetings, individual survey responses, collaboration with community-based organizations, and listening sessions, NEEP and its consortium of partners will curate and roll out a multifaceted resource center. This resource hub encompasses training, educational sessions, and other resources offering technical support to empower communities in achieving their sustainable transportation goals. The project involves conducting transportation assessments, developing and implementing a program of training, education, and technical assistance, and engaging community members to produce implementation plans for high priority actions based on this comprehensive approach.

The Compensation Plan, as proposed in the NEEP's Community Benefits Plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Vehicle Technologies Office (VTO), seeks to establish a transparent and inclusive framework for compensating participants engaged in planned community-driven project activities. The Plan describes eligible engagement activities, compensation structures, expectations, and additional considerations for the project period.

## Eligibility

To encourage equitable and informed decision-making, NEEP may compensate community-based organizations (**CBOs**) and individual community members (**Participants**) for assistance and/or participation in virtual or in-person surveys, interviews, or events (such as working groups, focus groups, committees, listening sessions, or training sessions), or in providing expertise and insights to aid NEEP's or its partners' transportation planning work or outreach efforts (**Engagement Activity**).

Participants and CBOs can participate in Engagement Activities and receive stipends throughout the duration of the Community-Driven Transportation Project. Eligible CBOs are defined as nonprofit organizations, including formal organizations with legal nonprofit status (501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), etc.) and informal, grassroots community



groups that are mission-driven and are representative of a community or segments of a community, defined by place or population, and that provide financial, educational, cultural, and/or other resources aimed at enhancing health, wealth, and overall community well-being. CBOs and Participants are eligible for this Compensation Plan if they would not be otherwise compensated for participating in Engagement Activities.

## Eligible/Planned Engagement Activities and Events

### 1. Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) will include 10 CBO members with expertise in transportation planning, transportation decarbonization, community engagement, workforce development, engagement with historically underserved communities, and other relevant skills. The SAC's responsibilities will include participating in virtual meetings and providing input on key deliverables and plans. The SAC will meet virtually once per quarter for one hour and will also be asked to provide input by email on deliverables such as the model implementation plan, workforce needs assessment, public events to raise awareness, and replicable models for a regional audience.

### 2. Listening Sessions and Focus Groups

As part of the transportation audit aimed at identifying transportation needs and barriers, CBOs may help plan, host, execute, and/or participate in listening sessions and focus groups. Topics will include local transportation needs, barriers, opportunities, and community interest in clean transportation technologies. The listening sessions/focus groups will offer a guided discussion with opportunities for CBOs and Participants to provide insights on identified topics, either in person or virtually, as predetermined by NEEP or NEEP's partners. Each listening session/focus group will take approximately 1-2 hours.

### 3. Community Forums

CBOs may help plan, host, execute, and/or participate in virtual or in-person community forums designed to present Community-Driven Transportation Project findings. Feedback will be solicited from CBOs and Participants regarding training and technical assistance initiatives that will support the project's future direction. The community forums are intended to assist communities in building support and ownership over project plans.

### 4. In-Community Engagement and Training

CBOs may help plan, host, and/or execute activities aimed at building community knowledge in clean transportation, identifying key workforce development and training needs, and establishing a process and schedule for training and engagement programs. Participants and CBOs can participate in these events with areas of focus including, but not limited to:

- Workforce needs assessment and workforce development opportunities in clean transportation for industry and business groups, such as electricians, mechanics, and solar installers.



- Economic and business development opportunities in clean transportation for fleet owners and small businesses, including bicycle shops, gas stations, car dealerships, and property owners.
- Demystifying clean technologies, such as low emissions vehicles, electric heavy-duty vehicles, micro-mobility, and mobility management technologies.
- Public sector opportunities for fleet replacement, public charging stations, public vehicle utilization models, public transit, and utility partnerships.
- Financing opportunities to advance clean transportation priorities, including state and federal grants, public-private partnerships, performance contracting, and green banks.

## 5. Surveys and Interviews

Participants may have the chance to provide feedback and insights on transportation-related topics through surveys or interviews within designated timeframes established during the project. These surveys/ interviews will cover topics such as transportation needs, clean transportation preferences, and satisfaction with project activities. Surveying and interviewing participants will ensure local voices are heard and community perspectives are considered in the project decision-making process. CBOs can be compensated to administer surveys or hold interviews.

## 6. Input and Feedback on Deliverables

CBOs may have the opportunity to provide reviews of project deliverables, such as audit results or implementation plans, to ensure alignment with community priorities and needs.

## Compensation

Expectations and compensation rates for any given activity or event, and the timeframe for participation and compensation, will be clearly communicated before participation. Participants and CBOs will each have different pathways for participating in the community compensation plan.

Participants will be compensated per event or activity using physical or digital gift cards based on a predetermined compensation rate. Physical or digital gift cards will be provided upon completion of the Engagement Activity. To be eligible for compensation, Participants must elect to receive the stipend at the event or end of the survey and provide contact information if elected to receive digital payment. Participants can elect to receive a physical gift card during in person events. Participants in an online survey can request a physical card through the gift card provider, with the understanding that the participant may have to pay an additional fee for this service.

To encourage equitable and informed decision-making, it is critical to recognize CBOs and individuals for their participation, insights, and expertise through a formal compensation plan.

CBOs can administer surveys or conduct interviews on behalf of NEEP and project partners. When surveys or interviews are administered by CBOs, individuals may agree to forego their individual stipend and have the funds go directly to the CBO.



CBOs participating on the Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be eligible to receive an annual stipend of \$800. To receive this payment, CBOs must commit to participating in all four virtual Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings throughout the year and provide input on deliverables such as audit results, implementation plans, or others.

With prior approval by NEEP, CBOs supporting or hosting planned activities will be eligible to receive hourly compensation for labor, travel expenses for in-person events/activities,<sup>1</sup> childcare costs, office or event space, and similar services. To receive payment, CBOs must provide an invoice and a completed Compensation Form to NEEP within the agreed upon timeframe. The Compensation Form asks participants to verify eligibility for compensation by confirming that they are not paid by their employer or another organization for their time spent on the specific activity. The form will be provided at the end of an Engagement Activity and will be verified (signed) by NEEP or NEEP’s partner organization leading the activity.

The compensation rate structure is set and adjusted by NEEP based on market rates (gathered through input from CBOs and consideration of what other agencies are paying for similar activities) for time and level of effort.

For in-person events, NEEP will include a transportation allowance in the stipends offered to participants. No additional transportation stipend will be offered.

Meals and refreshments may be provided during in-person events. Childcare support may be provided.

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**Approximate Stipends**<sup>(a)</sup>

<b>Surveys/Interviews</b>	<b>\$30 - \$50</b> <sup>(b)</sup>
<b>Participants – per virtual event</b>	<b>\$75 - \$100</b>
<b>Participants – per in-person event</b> <sup>(c)</sup>	<b>\$150</b>
<b>Hourly Rate for CBOs</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Annual Stipend for SAC participation</b> <sup>(d)</sup>	<b>\$800</b>

(a) The compensation rates outlined in this plan are designated as ranges, subject to variation based on the geographical location of the activity or event being compensated. The total stipend allowance for the project is subject to an overall limit as outlined in accordance with the project budget.

(b) The stipend will depend on the length of the survey/interview.

(c) Travel costs to and from the event are included in the stipend, not additional.

(d) This annual stipend applies to CBOs participating in quarterly Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings and providing input on deliverables as explained above.

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<sup>1</sup> Travel expenses will be based on United States General Services Administration, [Privately owned vehicle \(POV\) mileage reimbursement rates](#).



## Expectations

CBOs and Participants in the Engagement Activity will be compensated for their time, effort, and meaningful contribution.

CBOs and Participants must stay for at least 75 percent of each event's duration to be compensated. At the end of the event or activity, CBOs and Participants will complete a Compensation Form, noting the dates of completed Engagement Activity. Staff leading the activity will verify CBO and Participant attendance/completion of the Engagement Activity and approve the form.

CBOs and Participants are expected to actively engage in virtual or in-person meetings, contributing their insights and feedback. A feedback form may be provided after virtual meetings, which must be completed to be eligible for compensation.

Participants in a survey and interview become eligible for compensation upon completion of survey or interview. CBOs can administer surveys or interviews and can receive compensation when the agreed number of surveys or interviews are completed. It is expected that participants provide thoughtful and honest responses.

## Additional Considerations

The compensation plan will prioritize equity and inclusion, ensuring that all participants, regardless of background or role, are treated fairly and receive appropriate recognition for their contributions. A feedback form may be provided at the end of each event/activity, encouraging open communication with participants and allowing them to provide insights on the compensation process, and suggestions on improvements or modifications.