

Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program Applicants and Stakeholders Check In Questions and Answers

Question 1	Answer 1
Can you describe the feasibility study associated with fleet facilities?	There is no feasibility study/business plan requirement for Fleet facility applications.
If a customer is replacing tanks but not asking for funding from USDA for that portion, does USDA still require station shows an environmental review of tanks	Environmental review is a fundamental requirement for all HBIIP projects.
Often times oil companies (retailers) own traditional c-stores as well as "truck stops" - putting them all in as fleet facilities doesn't make sense? In other words - if someone owns 5 c stores, and one of them is considered a travel center / truck stop because it has dedicated diesel pumps - why would they have to consider themselves or qualify themselves as a fleet facility	A Company and all affiliates, may submit one and only one application and must choose to apply as one and only one Applicant Type. If you choose to apply, YOU must determine what Applicant Type "makes sense" for you as a business. But you may choose one and only one Applicant Type.
Owners of fuel sites are often long term lease holders who also own and maintain the responsibility of the fuel infrastructure - does that meet ownership requirement? This may not mean the company who owns the tanks owns the land - is that ok?	For the purposes of HBIIP, a long term lease or lease to own arrangement is a sufficient ownership structure. Be advised however, that LEASE PAYMENTS and land purchases are not eligible expenses under HBIIP.
If we do not complete the project as specified in the grant execution agreement, in the 18 months period, what happens to the funds? Do we have to give it back?	The grant/project execution period is for up to 18 months. There is also upon request and consent by the Agency an available extension of up to 12 months beyond the 18 month execution period to complete the project. If you are not able to complete the terms of your agreement during the 30 months allowed, you will be notified of the possibility of Termination and/or Recovery, as will be specified in your Signed Grant Agreement.
Are UDC (under-dispenser containment) costs, related to E85 retrofitting projects eligible for grant funding?	Equipment related to the E85 dispenser is eligible for up to 50 percent cost share. Equipment related to the underground storage tank and system for existing stations is eligible for up to 25 percent cost share.
Your webpage https://www.rd.usda.gov/hbiip is down - it says access denied.	Keep trying.
It appears that the HBIIP website is down currently, FYI.	Again keep trying. We're working with our Webmaster to limit service interruptions. Still, they happen.
We are looking to set up transloading and a fueling station. We are looking to bring in fuel via rail. Could this grant be used to extend our rail spur?	You must choose whether to apply as an owner of fueling stations or as fuel distribution facility. You may submit one and only one application. A rail spur/extension may be considered as part of a fuel distribution facility however, you must demonstrate how the extension contributes significantly to throughput volume of Higher Blends of biodiesel, greater than 5 percent such as B20 or higher. Otherwise, such an application is unlikely to score very highly on a throughput gallon per dollar of requested funds basis.

	Fuel distribution of higher blends of ethanol is NOT an eligible purpose under HBIIP.
If we receive the grant and sign the grant execution agreement, when do we get the grant funds? upfront or after?	Grant proceeds are disbursed on a reimbursed expenses basis, during the grant/project execution period.
It was mentioned last time and Tony just made reference to fuel distribution facilities being eligible ONLY for biodiesel and not ethanol, though that's not what it appears to say in the Federal Register announcement. Could he please say this one more time?	Under HBIIP up to \$100 million is made available to eligible participants. Of the total amount of available funds, approximately \$86 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities (including fueling stations, convenience stores, hypermarket fueling stations, fleet facilities, and similar entities with capital investments) for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of fuel ethanol greater than 10 percent ethanol, such as E15 or higher; and approximately \$14 million will be made available to transportation fueling facilities and fuel distribution facilities (including terminal operations, depots, and midstream partners), for eligible implementation activities related to higher blends of biodiesel greater than 5 percent biodiesel, such as B20 or higher.
So the SPOC state review is dependent on where our company is headquartered or the state where the project grant request is? for us they are two different states	Understood. Company headquarters location is the SPOC. However, when contacting it is appropriate to advise the SPOC of any states in which the project will be located.
I also had issues with hbiip page access. Tested it and is occurring with other RD pages as well	A temporary service interruption common to all government Webpages. Please try again.
We own 3 locations but want to help some of our jobber clients get access to the HBIIP. Do we still classify our operation as owner of 10 or fewer stores	If you're an owner of 3 fueling stations, yes, 3 stations are fewer than 10 stations, so you would apply as an owner of 10 or fewer fueling stations. As to how you would involve a jobber client, we'll need additional information.
Is above ground storage ineligible?	No, ASTs are eligible.
Does overflow/ area spill containment count as an eligible cost?	As part of the dispenser related equipment, yes.
Can one entity apply for both E85 at retail stations and B20 at distribution terminals?	You must choose whether to apply as an owner of fueling stations or as fuel distribution facility. You may submit one and only one application. A rail spur/extension may be considered as part of a fuel distribution facility however, you must demonstrate how the extension contributes significantly to throughput volume of Higher Blends of biodiesel, greater than 5 percent such as B20 or higher. Otherwise, such an application is unlikely to score very highly on a throughput gallon per dollar of requested funds basis. Fuel distribution of higher blends of ethanol is NOT an eligible purpose under HBIIP.
We have 24 stores but only 3 stores will be applying for HBIIP equipment. Are we Greater than 10 stores?	Yes. 24 is greater than 10. You would apply as an owner of more than 10 fueling stations. You are not eligible for Targeted Assistance.
Sorry, what is an e-authorization number?	You may obtain a USDA eAuthentication ID/account here, https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/HBIIPeAuthenticationGuide.pdf
So who has the EAuth ID or where do we get it	You may obtain a USDA eAuthentication ID/account here, https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/HBIIPeAuthenticationGuide.pdf
What about New stations installing THREE instead of TWO tanks because they want to have E15 or E85?	UST/S for a fueling facility constructed during the grant period is an ineligible expense no matter how many are tanks are installed.

We are planning a new distribution facility, what will be required to show as evidentiary support of Validated Demand/Market Drivers/Documented Incentives/Project Sustainability/Investment to consumer education-marketing/Partnerships (ALL Gallons Added)?	As a fuel distribution facility applicant, must determine what is evidentiary support for these required elements. The planning documents -- Feasibility Study/Business Plan and Technical Report must support your claims as specified.
Can grant writers appear on multiple applications for different projects/clients ? Or may a grant writer only work on one project?	A grant writer may support more than one application provided that he/she is listed (eAuthentication) as an Authorized User in the Company Access Request.
Perhaps you need to set up a hotline for questions?	Thank you for that suggestion. A phone number is provided.
Is rail an eligible project cost for a distribution facility ?	A rail spur/extension may be considered as part of a fuel distribution facility however, you must demonstrate how the extension contributes significantly to throughput volume of Higher Blends of biodiesel, greater than 5 percent such as B20 or higher. Otherwise, such an application is unlikely to score very highly on a throughput gallon per dollar of requested funds basis. Fuel distribution of higher blends of ethanol is NOT an eligible purpose under HBIIP.
Will consideration for geographical diversity be given to the location of biodiesel terminals? Or does this refer only to fuel station facility projects?	No. Geographic Diversity is afforded to fueling stations and fleet facilities.
How many applicants have applied so far?	
Why does a company need 5 id numbers. The IRS seems to be satisfied with one....	You must complete the required fields to the Access Request to be allowed access to the online application system.
Why is only RACK blended gallons allowed. Cant a company blend their own if they are allowed to blend either bio or ethenol ?	Fuel dispensers retrofitted to dispense rack blended E15 is only one type of project among many eligible to receive HBIIP funds.
Can you explain more about the categories that should be broken out on the SF 424C Budget Form? For example for a station, should everything go under construction? Or do you want the site work, equipment, demolition, and construction broken out separately?	You must determine to complete the SF 424C in a way that is appropriate to your project.
Where do you post the answers to the previously asked questions on previous webinars?	Under the Events tab, https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program
Can you discuss allowable administrative expenses?	You must determine to complete the SF 424C in a way that is appropriate to your project.
Applied to SAM on May 12. They verified my FEN. But, they still not back with the CAGE Code. Do you know if I need take additional action to check on the status?	SAM CAGE code are taken longer than usual; up to and sometimes more than 15 business days.
Do find a project narrative response requirement - is the technical report in essence your narrative description of your project?	Yes, as well as providing important project evidentiary documentation. The Technical Report Guide is available here, https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/HBIIP_Project_Technical_Report_Guide.pdf
Finally granted access to the OAS - worked on the application requirements saving my work frequently but next time I tried to log in using my UM and PW I get an error message "bad request" what can I do about this system user problem	Clear your browser. Try again. Beyond that contact the Help Desk for technical support.
How do you know what level access you've been granted for e-auth??	Level 1 access is all that's required for access to the HBIIP online application system.

where does your e-authorization ID# appear after youve been granted OAS access?	You will receive notification from eAuthentication.
Please make sure my "bad request" error message request gets addressed	Clear your browser. Try again. Beyond that contact the Help Desk for technical support.
Can a Grant Writer handle the entire application for my company and if so where do I find a Grant Writer?	I recommend contacting your State's renewable fuels promotion organization.
Is this limited to biodiesel or does it include ethanol blends?	A fuel distribution facility is limited to higher blends of biodiesel.
Webpage is listed as access denied right now - was able to access this morning	Keep trying. Service interruptions are a fact of life under current circumstances. Your patience is appreciated.
Are these higher blends approved by the OEM's for warranties?	Yes, as required by law.
We have a project that will potentially start construction in late August or September. Can we apply for a grant even though the funding will not be awarded until 4-6 weeks after the deadline on August 13th?	Yes. Just be advised that no expenses may be incurred outside the grant period.
What is required to obtain an e-authentication credential? DUNS? SAM CAGE?	Go to the Website, To Apply tab. Open the Checklist. Follow the instructions. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program
Will this set of directions/slide set be available after today's presentation?	Yes under the Events tab. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program
Can you discuss more fully the section g in the technical report - what type of procurement documentation will be required to demonstrate open and free competition	https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program
In section 7.7.1.10 in the App. instruction guide - it refers to numbers self--populating from from 7.8.1.11 and .12 - those sections are not in the guide - what should those refer to?	7.7 refers to Financial Information -- Budget Costs and Estimated Funding Sources; 7.8 Refers to the Supporting Information uploaded as Attachments. Follow the provided instructions to complete these elements of the application.
Please discuss what the "matching fund marketing commitment" means in section 7.5.6.8 in the application guide.	Up to 10 percent of an applicant's Matching Funds requirement (up to five percent of total project costs) may be used to pay consumer education and/or marketing and/or signage related expenses. HBIIIP grant funds awarded to transportation fueling stations are intended to assist with converting those facilities to ensure full compatibility with HB fuel through upgrade or installation of fuel dispensers, related equipment, and infrastructure. And while the contributions of consumer education and/or marketing and/or signage toward a fuel station's fuel sales are well recognized, a very tall sign to display fuel prices does not in any way assist a facility with higher blends compatibility. Therefore, the Agency determined that while HBIIIP grant funds may not be used for consumer education and/or marketing and/or signage, Matching Funds may.
Once you have a SAM Cage Code and DUNS # one can apply for the USDA E. Authentication #?Correct	See eAuthentication instructions provided here, https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/HBIIIPeAuthenticationGuide.pdf
If you have numerous locations, how do you reflect that on the application?	Follow the provided instructions for 7.5 Fueling Stations, in the Online Application Instructions/Users Guide available here, https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/HBIIIP_Online_Application_Instructions_UsersGuide051220_EO.pdf

Can you go back and add somebody like a grant writer if you already have a log in?	We do not encourage this. If you already have access to the online application system and require an additional Authorized User be allowed access to your application, this requires a special request of our online operations. You must submit another Access Request with the additional Authorized User information.
Is there a list or something that shows what is an eligible cost?	Eligible cost information is published in the Notice of Funds Availability on May 5, 2015, and is available here, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-05-05/html/2020-09685.htm
I called the number on the email and it's just hold music, i cant hear the presentation	Webinar information is available here, https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program , under the Events tab
Can the fuel distribution grant be used for more than 1 terminal facility? Thank you	One application, one project, more than one location, subject to 50 percent of total eligible costs or \$5 million whichever is less.
Do Western states have priority scoring in the Fuel Distribution grant too? Thanks	No. Western States Administrator priority is afforded to fueling stations and fleet facilities.
For Biodiesel at bulk terminals, can funds be used for two different locations?	One application, one project, more than one location, subject to 50 percent of total eligible costs or \$5 million whichever is less.
https://www.rd.usda.gov/hbiip not working on my end either. It says "Access Denied."	Keep trying.
So HBIIIP webpage is not allowing access right now?	If at first you don't succeed. See instructions provided immediately above.
If you are writing the application for another entity, who's information do you use?	A grant writer may support more than one application provided that he/she is listed (eAuthentication) as an Authorized User in the Company Access Request.
I haven't seen the link to past HBIIIP webinar recordings or the Q&A posted anywhere on the site. Where can this be found on the site?	https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program , under the Events tab.
Can refurbished storage holding tanks be eligible under the distribution/terminal category of the HBIIIP application or does it have to be new?	No. Used equipment is ineligible under HBIIIP.
We currently have a crude oil distribution facility and we are looking to convert it into a biodiesel and blended diesel distribution facility. Would we be eligible for the program?	Yes, as long as the biodiesel implementation is for biodiesel greater than 5 percent, such as B20 or higher.
I understand that reporting costs is not an allowable cost. What about management costs? Would that be considered "administrative and legal"?	You must determine to complete the SF 424C in a way that is appropriate to your project.
Can refurbished storage tanks be eligible?	No. Used equipment is ineligible under HBIIIP.
As Cage code taking longer, can we submit application with all other details, and have the process at least start and will provide once it will available?	No you may not. Your incomplete Access Request will be returned to you for completion.
Can you post those Q& A for the public and not just an applicant to see. thx	https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program , under the Events tab.
How much score is needed for eligibility for fuel service station?	There is no minimum eligibility score.
Do you know if applicants can include rail access as part of their terminal application build-out, even if it is only matching funds? Rail increases volume throughput at a terminal.	A rail spur/extension may be considered as part of a fuel distribution facility however, you must demonstrate how the extension contributes significantly to throughput volume of Higher Blends of biodiesel, greater than 5 percent such as B20 or higher. Otherwise, such an application is unlikely to score very highly on a throughput gallon per dollar of requested funds basis.

	Fuel distribution of higher blends of ethanol is NOT an eligible purpose under HBIIP.
If you are a station owner that owns multiple locations that are set up as individual LLCs or Incs with no parent company-- how would you apply?	If you own more than 10 LLC fueling stations, then apply as an Owner of more than 10 fueling stations, If you own fewer then apply as an Owner of 10 or fewer fueling stations. You and all your affiliated LLCs may submit ONE and ONLY ONE application.
You did not ask my question, can an entity apply on behalf of the potential awardee using the grant writers information, that has all of the necessary, required, federal information and have the potential awardee, be a sub-contractor to the grant writer?	My apologies, there 77 questions submitted, of which yours was #71. Time simply did not permit. NO, you may not. You may apply to HBIIP if and only if you are an OWNER/or have a Significant Ownership interest, of fueling stations, fleet facilities or a fuel distribution facility. You MAY NOT apply as an entity such as a grant writer on behalf of another entity such as Owner of a Company.
What about terminal expansion for higher bio-blends and rack-blending equipment. how much funding is available for that?	If you are inquiry about higher bio-blends of ethanol, no funding is available. Up to \$14 million is available for biodiesel related implementation acitvities to fuel distribution facilities.
yes user authorization, because we have the SAM #'s already	Congratulations! Go to the Website, To Apply tab. Open the Checklist. Follow the instructions. https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/higher-blends-infrastructure-incentive-program
Can you apply for more than one terminal location with separate applications?	One application, one project, more than one location, subject to 50 percent of total eligible costs or \$5 million whichever is less.
So IS ANY FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR TERMINALS AND EXPANDING THE size of UPGRADING THOSE DISTRIBUTION FACILITIES	Yes, to fuel distribution facilities for implementaion activities involving biodiesel greater than 5 percent, such as B20. One application, one project, more than one location, subject to 50 percent of total eligible costs or \$5 million whichever is less.
Does the HBIIP program apply to Bio Diesel alos, or only Ethanol	Up to \$14 million is available for Higher Blends of biodiesel implementation activities.
So one application cannot include both ethanol and biodiesel? We work with many stations and biodiesel as well. We are not the owner, but the supplier.	Owners of fueling stations and fleet facilities may apply for higher blends of ethanol and biodiesel implementation activities -- dispensers, storage tanks, related equipment and infrastructure.