



Updated May 22, 2026

Indian Energy Programs at the Department of Energy

Indian energy programs at the Department of Energy (DOE) are carried out primarily by the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs (IE) and the Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF, formerly the Loan Programs Office). IE funds various activities that assist Indian tribes and Alaska Native Corporations with energy development, including electrification, capacity building, and cost reduction. EDF provides loan guarantees and direct lending for energy development through the Tribal Energy Financing Program (TEFP). Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations may be eligible for funding through other DOE programs as well. Multiple laws passed by the 119th Congress relate to the funding of IE and EDF programs.

IE's Indian Energy Programs

Section 2606 of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 (EPACT 1992; P.L. 102-486) authorized DOE to grant financial assistance to “Indian tribal governments.” Through legislative and administrative action, these programs have changed over time. IE provides financial assistance, technical assistance, and education and capacity building to address barriers to developing energy resources on tribal lands. For FY2026, IE funding totaled \$75 million (P.L. 119-74), \$25 million more than DOE requested. For FY2027, the House Committee on Appropriations bill released on May 14, 2026, proposed \$75 million for IE. DOE requested \$50.038 million and stated that IE assistance would prioritize “affordable, reliable, and secure energy.” The Trump Administration has separately described wind and solar energy as “unreliable.” For comparison, all budget requests from the Biden Administration included specific financial assistance for renewable energy. For example, for FY2025, DOE requested funding for assistance to transition tribal colleges and universities to renewable energy and to continue the Clean Energy Innovator Fellows Program.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance constitutes IE’s primary form of support for energy technology deployment on tribal lands. In November 2025, DOE reported that since 2010, financial assistance funded over 250 tribal energy projects. In March 2026, DOE issued a notice of funding opportunity with \$50 million of expected funding available for tribal energy.

Technical Assistance

IE technical assistance is available at no cost to applicants and is intended to help overcome obstacles or fulfill needs in developing and implementing tribal energy projects. Types of technical assistance provided by IE have included education and outreach, technical analysis, financial analysis, and strategic energy planning for tribal energy projects. Between 2010 and 2025, DOE completed 534 technical assistance requests.

EDF's Tribal Energy Financing Program

Section 503 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT 2005; P.L. 109-58), among other provisions, authorized DOE to guarantee up to 90% of a loan (including principal and interest) made to an Indian tribe or a tribal energy development organization for energy development. Aggregate outstanding guaranteed loans cannot exceed \$20 billion at any time. As with all federal credit programs, loans guaranteed under this program are statutorily required to include a “subsidy cost” payment (a share of estimated program-wide losses) prior to finalizing the loan guarantee agreement. Subsidy costs can be paid through appropriations, by the applicant, or a combination thereof. Congress provided non-expiring funding to the program in FY2017 (P.L. 115-31), including \$8.5 million for loan guarantee subsidy costs. The FY2023 appropriations law (P.L. 117-328) provided an additional \$2.0 million for subsidy costs. DOE first issued a solicitation for the Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program (TELGP) in 2018. DOE has amended and reissued the solicitation multiple times since 2018. The most recent supplement, Supplement IV, modifies the solicitation to conform to changes mandated by P.L. 117-169, often referred to as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, or IRA. Submissions are due August 31, 2028.

The FY2022 appropriations law (P.L. 117-103) provided authority for the Secretary of Energy to provide direct loans and required that such loans be made through the Federal Financing Bank (via EDF). Authority to provide direct loans was also granted for funds appropriated previously. Section 50145 of the IRA provided permanent direct lending authority for TELGP and eliminated the 90% limit for loan guarantees. The law also appropriated \$75.0 million through September 30, 2028, and expanded the loan guarantee authority from \$2 billion to \$20 billion. At the time of publication, no direct loans have been issued. One loan guarantee has been issued under this program, for \$72.8 million for the Viejas Microgrid project in California. According to the Government Accountability Office, eight additional applications were in the intake phase, and eight were listed as inactive, as of September 2024. In the 119th Congress, P.L. 119-21 (§50402) rescinded unobligated funding provided to TELGP by the IRA, leaving \$10.5 million for the loan subsidy. For FY2026, P.L. 119-74 appropriated \$6.3 million for administrative expenses for TELGP. DOE requested \$2.0 million for administrative expenses for the program for FY2027, while the House Committee on Appropriations bill released on May 14, 2026, proposed \$6.3 million.

Legislative History of Indian Energy Programs

Sections 502 and 503 of EPACT 2005 established IE within DOE. In addition, EPACT 2005 broadened the DOE tribal

financial assistance program to a wider range of energy projects. This included a grant program to assist tribes in meeting energy-related needs, with an authorization of appropriations of \$20 million annually for FY2006 through FY2016. CRS estimates that approximately \$64 million was appropriated during this period. The Energy Act of 2020 (Division Z of P.L. 116-260) reauthorized funding for this program at \$30 million annually for FY2021 through FY2025. Title V of EPACT 2005 established electricity purchasing authority of tribal energy by the federal government. In August 2024, the Biden Administration announced the first such purchase, for certificates matching the net annual usage for 185 buildings in 12 states with “100% carbon pollution-free electricity.”

In the 115th Congress, P.L. 115-325 made several adjustments to DOE’s Indian energy programs, including the following changes that are still in effect:

- expanded eligibility for DOE’s tribal energy grant program to include intertribal organizations;
- expanded program activities to include a broader array of energy development projects, beyond renewable and energy efficiency projects;
- allowed grants to be used to increase the capacity of tribes to manage energy programs;
- expanded eligibility for TELGP to include tribal energy development organizations; and
- made DOE technical and scientific resources more available for tribal energy activities and projects.

In addition, Section 8013 of the Energy Act of 2020 amended Indian energy programs by allowing the Secretary of Energy to reduce any required recipient’s cost share for grants from 50% to 10%.

Selected Administrative History

Tribal Energy Program

From FY1994 through FY2003, DOE administered financial assistance to tribes for energy projects under activities with various names, including Tribal Energy Grants, Tribal Energy Assistance, and Renewable Indian Energy Resources. In FY2004, DOE established the Tribal Energy Program (TEP) (sometimes referred to as “Tribal Energy Activities”). The TEP operated within the Weatherization and Intergovernmental Activities Program of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). Following the establishment of IE in 2005, the TEP continued to operate separately and receive funding through EERE. In FY2015, the TEP transferred from EERE to IE and was renamed the Indian Energy Program.

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs

Congress first appropriated funding for IE in FY2009. The explanatory statement for the FY2009 omnibus appropriations law (P.L. 111-8) included \$1.5 million “to establish an Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs, as authorized in section 502 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.” Congress appropriated funding to IE under DOE’s Departmental Administration (DA) appropriations account. IE formally opened in FY2011 after appointing a director

and hiring administrative staff. DOE established IE under the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. Until FY2012, IE received its funding through this office, which is funded through the DA appropriation. In the FY2012 budget justification, DOE requested that IE be a separate funding category within DA.

In the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235), Congress eliminated funding for the TEP within EERE and provided funding to the TEP only under the consolidated IE office, which remained within the DA appropriations account. For FY2016, FY2017, and FY2018, Congress continued to fund IE through the DA account. Congress provided a separate appropriations account for IE for the first time in the FY2019 appropriations act (P.L. 115-244) and has continued that practice through FY2026.

Table 1 lists the authorizing statutes for the TEP, IE, and TELGP.

Table 1. Department of Energy Indian Energy Programs and Authorizing Legislation

Program Name	Authorizing Legislation	Subsequent Amendments
Tribal Energy Program (TEP)	P.L. 102-486, Title XXVI, §2606	P.L. 109-58, Title V, §503
Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs (IE)	P.L. 109-58, Title V, §§502, 503	P.L. 115-325, Title I, §§101, 104, 105; P.L. 116-260, Division Z, §8013
Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program (TELGP)	P.L. 109-58, Title V, §503	P.L. 115-325, Title I, §101; P.L. 117-169, Title V, §50145

Source: CRS.

Notes: The Tribal Energy Program (now Indian Energy Program) was transferred from the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs in FY2015.

Congressional Considerations: Funding

Congress may continue to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of these energy programs for Indian tribes and Alaska Native Corporations. For FY2027, Congress may consider the extent to which IE funding should or should not support wind and solar energy projects. As noted above, P.L. 119-21 rescinded unobligated funding provided to TELGP by the IRA. In its FY2026 budget request, DOE proposed canceling the TELGP loan subsidy, which Congress did not adopt in the FY2026 appropriations law (P.L. 119-74). DOE’s FY2027 budget request does not propose changes to the loan subsidy but does request a 33% decrease in IE funding and a 68% decrease in TELGP funding. Congress may consider whether existing and proposed funding levels are appropriate to achieve the program goal of expanding energy development.

Corrie E. Clark, Specialist in Energy Policy

Mark Holt, Specialist in Energy Policy

Lexie Ryan, Analyst in Energy Policy

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.