



How To Work With the Tribe's Electric Utility To Install Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

The electric utility is a crucial partner for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure projects. Tribes should engage with the utility early and often for successful charging projects. This fact sheet outlines key information a Tribe needs for engagement.

For more details about working with an electric utility, see *Strategic Pathways for Indigenous Resilient and Innovative Transportation*: docs.nlr.gov/docs/fy26osti/99494.pdf.

Discussing EV Charging Infrastructure With the Tribe's Electric Utility

Before meeting with the electric utility, familiarize yourself with the following concepts:

- Grid hosting capacity is the maximum amount of electricity the grid can handle at a time—the total power that can be delivered to customers without issues (see **Section 3.6** of *Strategic Pathways for Indigenous Resilient and Innovative Transportation* for more details). Grid upgrades or flexible interconnection might be available if the grid hosting capacity is not sufficient.

U-Finder

Use the U-Finder tool (afdc.energy.gov/utility-finder) to identify a contact at the local utility. This search tool helps states, communities, and fleets identify active local utility partners that can help with the installation of EV chargers.



The Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy and the National Laboratory of the Rockies partnered to develop resources for Tribes interested in pursuing public EV charging infrastructure.



- EV charging loads are not consistent. Charging power consumption can vary throughout the day and month.
- Level 2 chargers and direct-current fast chargers (DCFCs) have different voltage, power, and grid capacity requirements (see **Section 2.2** of *Strategic Pathways for Indigenous Resilient and Innovative Transportation* for more details).

To prepare for discussions with a utility about EV projects, be ready to share the following details about EV infrastructure plans:

- Number of charging ports.
- Power level (Level 1, Level 2, or DCFC).
- Desired parking lot location of charging stations.
- EV charging station arrival and commissioning timeline, if known.
- Futureproofing needs for potential expansion.

In addition, the Tribe can prepare the following relevant information:

- EV charging station ownership structure.
- Clarified jurisdictional boundaries.
- Tribal building, electrical, and fire codes.
- Tribal cultural resource protection laws.
- Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (TERO) requirements.

When discussing an EV charging infrastructure project with a utility, consider asking the following questions:

- **Programs and incentives:**

- Are there make-ready programs or incentives for EV charging station installation?
- Does the utility offer technical assistance, planning support, or site assessment support?

- **Rates:**

- What are the utility's consumption and demand rates?
- Does the utility have time-of-use rates? If so, what are they?
- Are there special utility rates available for EVs?

- **Capacity and upgrades:**

- What are the utility service equipment upgrade requirements and options?
- Can flexible interconnection or on-site batteries reduce the need for upgrades?
- Are there futureproofing considerations if the Tribe wants to expand the EV charging project in the future?

- **Process and timeline:**

- What is the process and time frame for equipment upgrades, if needed?
- What is the process and timeline for energization? What are the associated responsibilities for each party?
- Can a site visit be conducted prior to a formal new service or energization request?
- What is the cost to submit an energization request?

- **Workforce development:**

- How does the utility collaborate with the Tribe's TERO office?
- How can upgrade work incorporate job training for Tribal members?

EV Charging Station Planning and Implementation Processes

The electric utility will be involved throughout the EV charging infrastructure planning and implementation processes. Check with the utility about roles and responsibilities early. The time from construction to energization will vary; discuss time frames with the utility. See figure for details about utility involvement in the planning and implementation process. These steps can be iterative.

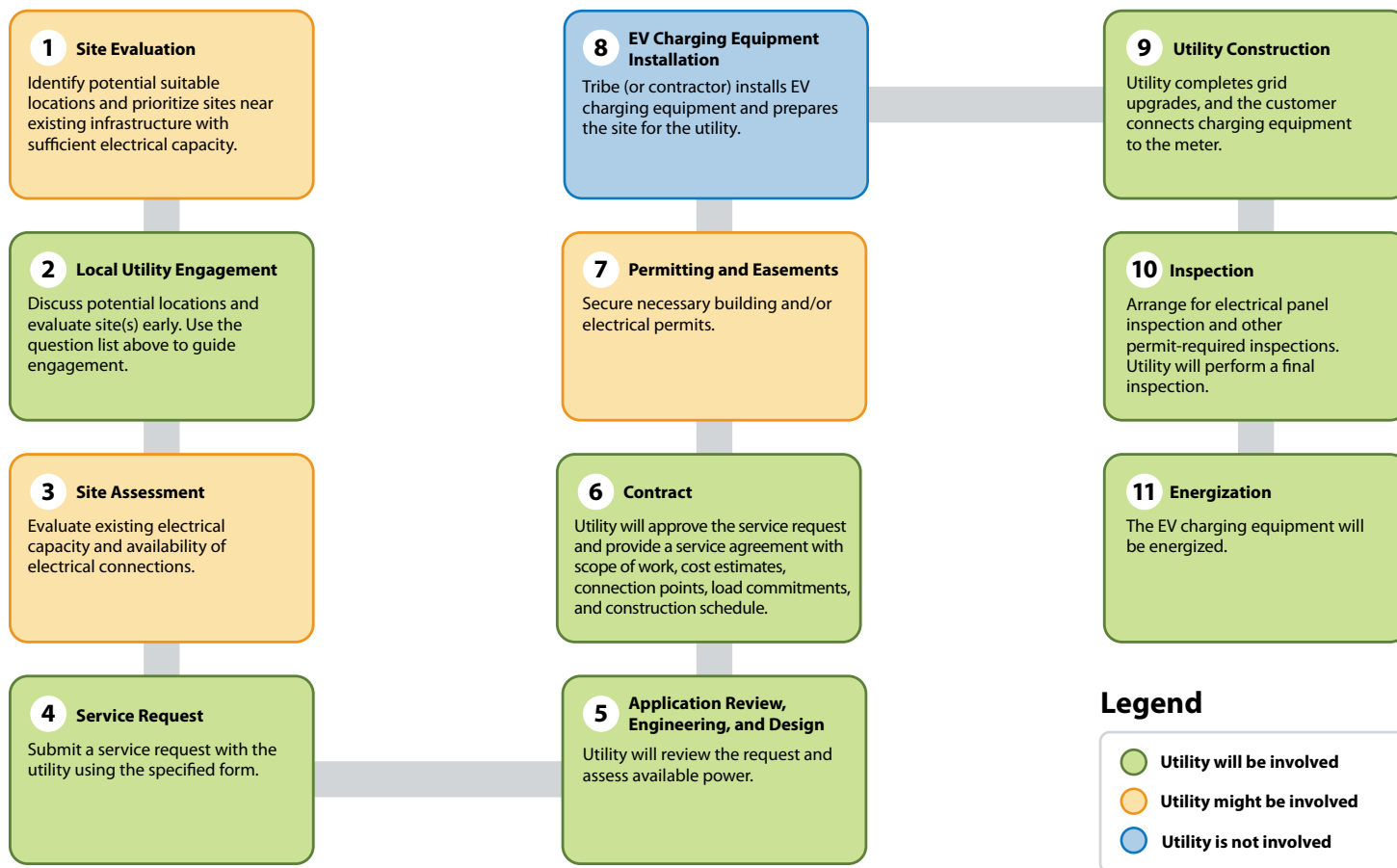


Figure 1. EV charging equipment planning and energization process

Cover image: The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe charges plug-in hybrid vehicles. Photo by Robert Knapp, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

Page 2: Photo from Electric Nation, Native Sun Community Power Development

Page 3: Illustration by Cameron Nelson, National Laboratory of the Rockies