

Make-Ready Programs



Make-Ready programs are a way utilities can encourage investments in EV charging infrastructure. 'Make-Ready' infrastructure refers to the electrical equipment – such as panels, wiring, and transformers – required to prepare a site for the installation of EV chargers. These programs can be structured to provide support for EV charging stations in a few different ways:

1. **Charging Port Incentive Program:** A credit or rebate based on the number of charging ports installed.
2. **Reimbursement/Cost Offset Program:** A rebate for the construction costs, utility upgrades, and supporting electrical infrastructure associated with making a site ready for EV charging.
3. **Utility-Performed Program:** A cost offset program in which the utility company hires, manages, and pays a construction crew to build a site that is ready for EV chargers to be installed by the customer.

The Connect the Watts™ team has identified 10 best practices for Make-Ready program design: 1) Allow Make-Ready Work Reimbursement, 2) Create Price Incentives to Offset Cost, 3) Define Responsibilities and Expenses, 4) Accept 'Build at Risk' Projects, 5) Implement Effective Cost Containment Measures, 6) Communicate Program Openings and Remaining Funds, 7) Provide Visual Project Tracker, 8) Utilize Existing Qualified Product Lists, 9) Streamline Ongoing Data Collection, and 10) Define Incentives by Port.



Allow Make-Ready Work Reimbursement

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Allow customers to conduct the make-ready work in front of the meter and behind the meter for reimbursement, offering customers greater flexibility and control over installation process to facilitate more rapid infrastructure deployments.
- ▶ Inform the customer early in the process to establish the correct materials and scope of work for subcontractors. Provide clear guidance on responsibilities and ownership of equipment in program materials available online. For example, Public Service Company of New Mexico's Transportation Electrification Program website links to the [program handbook](#) with details on the scope of work and cost eligibility.



Create Price Incentives to Offset Cost

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Charging station owners are increasingly building larger stations with high-power chargers to improve the customer experience. Utility programs should right-size incentives and provide a minimum of \$30,000-\$50,000 per port. This should be periodically reevaluated to ensure it is in line with market trends.
- ▶ To encourage development in preferred locations, consider providing higher incentives or bonuses in those geographies (e.g., 25% additional incentive for priority communities).



Define Responsibilities and Expenses

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ To promote transparency for applicants, clearly define eligible expenses under the program, and any required documentation for applicants such as invoices, contractor information, data reporting, etc.
- ▶ ConEdison in New York provides a [preliminary document checklist](#), closeout checklist, and a project cost breakdown form.



Accept 'Build at Risk' Projects

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Allow applicants to start and continue project construction during the application process, which encourages faster charger deployment and reduces pressure on utility staff to coordinate approval and construction timelines with customers.
- ▶ ComEd Illinois allows applicants to apply for incentives at any point from six months prior to project completion to 90 days after project completion.



Implement Effective Cost Containment Measures

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Program incentive limits should be on a site-by-site basis (e.g., each project is capped at \$500K in incentives). Company or annual caps can stymie continuous site development or distort the market by incentivizing one business model over another.



Communicate Program Openings and Remaining Funds

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Provide long lead times on program details and structure prior to opening for applications to prepare applicants.
- ▶ Publish an online dashboard with remaining funds that is updated quarterly at a minimum. This is especially important if the program is first-come, first-serve. For example, the Joint Utilities of New York updates its [Plug and Budget Tracker](#) monthly.



Provide Visual Project Tracker

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Create a project tracking portal that documents correspondence with program applicants and provides visual updates to project statuses.
- ▶ DTE, SMUD, and Eversource use a portal interface called PowerClerk, which has a visual status bar that updates over the course of application, agreement execution, and construction.



Utilize Existing Qualified Product Lists

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Streamline qualification process for charging equipment by utilizing the [Electric Power Research Institute's Vetted Product List](#), which provides a comprehensive list of charging equipment that meets various industry standards. Utilities across the country, including Georgia Power, Portland Gas and Electric, Commonwealth Edison, and the Joint Utilities of New York utilize this list.



Streamline Ongoing Data Collection

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ For ongoing data requirements, require annual submissions in line with ComEd Illinois to reduce administrative burden or utilize existing metering data.
- ▶ To further streamline data reporting submissions, programs can provide a spreadsheet template with data descriptions and cell type requirements similar to the Joint Utilities of New York and offer flexible submission methods such as via email or shared folder uploads.



Define Incentives by Port

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Clearly define program incentives with industry standards. For example, incentives based on the number of 'chargers' instead of 'ports' can be inequitable for dual-port equipment, capable of charging two vehicles simultaneously with the same customer experience as two single port chargers.
- ▶ For instance, the [U.S. Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels Data Center](#) reports the availability of charging by port and by station location.