



This briefing outlines best practices for state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and their partners when administering the recently announced \$5 billion NEVI program. These best practices accelerate transportation electrification by creating mutually beneficial public-private partnerships with electric vehicle service providers (EVSPs) like EVgo to deploy chargers nationwide. To learn more about our latest best practices, [contact our experts](#).

EVgo—with more than a decade of experience deploying fast charging infrastructure—launched the **Connect the Watts™ Initiative** to bring together the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure community to help accelerate charger deployment. EVgo has identified five program design principles that states should keep in mind: 1) Deploy Funding Quickly with Multiple Rounds on a Predictable Schedule, 2) Release a Competitive Solicitation and Evaluate Charger Locations with a Transparent Scoring Rubric, 3) Support Equitable Charger Deployment in Rural and Disadvantaged Communities, 4) Solicit Public Input & Forge Interagency Partnerships, and 5) Allow EVSPs to Build at Risk.



Deploy Funding Quickly with Multiple Rounds on a Predictable Schedule

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Predictable, pre-scheduled, pre-published funding windows allow for continuous development and the opportunity for administrators to adjust programmatic details based on learnings from previous rounds.
- ▶ Issue a **small amount of funding first** to jumpstart the program and adapt later based on learnings.
- ▶ [Charge Ahead Colorado](#) has three solicitations per year, which always take place in the same three months, allowing for predictable development cycles. [Pennsylvania](#) and [Maryland](#) have taken a similar approach for their EVSE programs, allowing for a predictable development schedule.

✗ Practices to Improve:

- ▶ **Uncertainty and lack of communication around timelines** for public funding programs can lead to shovel-ready projects being abandoned, investments forgone, and a negative experience for site hosts and stakeholders, including EV drivers.



Release a Competitive Solicitation & Evaluate Charger Locations with a Transparent Scoring Rubric

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ DCFC programs are typically competitively bid—a best practice in and of itself. Continue this practice, and **include an explicit, points-based score card to evaluate applications**. This informs EVSPs what program administrators are seeking so EVSPs may tailor projects. Specify criteria, not exact locations.
- ▶ [North Carolina](#) and [Ohio](#) offer quantifiable scoring rubrics that weigh distance to other public DCFC, traffic density, battery electric vehicle density, environmental justice, population density, and other factors.

✗ Practices to Improve:

- ▶ **Specified addresses**, or hard radiuses around highway exits, may exclude viable charger locations that are desirable for EV drivers and ignore traffic patterns, environmental justice concerns, and other factors. Specified locations can encounter real estate and grid constraints, such as power availability, that make them unviable for near-term charger deployment.



Support Equitable Charger Deployment in Rural & Disadvantaged Communities

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Weigh environmental justice in a quantifiable scoring rubric as seen in [North Carolina](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Maryland](#), and pair with tools such as the Environmental Protection Agency's EJScreen or USDOT's EV Charging Justice 40 Mapping Tool with existing best practice rubrics.
- ▶ Provide additional operational support for chargers outside of dense urban areas by making them eligible for operational assistance equal to 80% of the demand portion of energy and maintenance costs for five years, subject to competitive selection.

✗ Practices to Improve:

- ▶ Be aware that chargers in rural communities face challenges, such as likely low utilization and difficulties sending maintenance personnel longer distances.



Seek Public Input & Interagency Partnerships

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Utilize learnings from the Volkswagen Dieselgate settlement with interagency partnerships between state DOTs, energy and environment offices, and incumbent EVSE programs, as [Colorado](#) does. States can leverage existing state programs and personnel to administer programs.
- ▶ Allow for public comments on state plans prior to August 1st filing deadline and again after publishing a draft RFP. [Maryland's](#) DOE accepted RFP comments, and applicants identified and proposed meaningful changes that were implemented to remedy program design challenges.

✗ Practices to Improve:

- ▶ Programs that do not allow for public input may be poorly designed, resulting in a lack of qualified bids or underqualified bidders who fail to execute.



Allow EVSPs to Build at Risk

✓ Best Practices:

- ▶ Charging network operators should be allowed to build at their own financial risk between the time the program starts accepting applications to when the grant is awarded. If an application receives an award, those expenses should be reimbursable.
- ▶ In [Ohio](#), [Florida](#), [California](#), and [Texas](#), state programs allow applicants to begin project development at their own risk once the application window opens. In Florida, DEP allows almost everything up to commissioning to occur after the program opens and is reimbursable regardless of when the grant contract is signed (of course, no reimbursement occurs if a grant is not awarded).

✗ Practices to Improve:

- ▶ Policies that prohibit or disallow reimbursement for work undertaken prior to final contract signature can delay project development up to 12 months.

