

# Building Best-in-Class Utilities through RP<sub>3</sub> and SEP

August 13, 2024

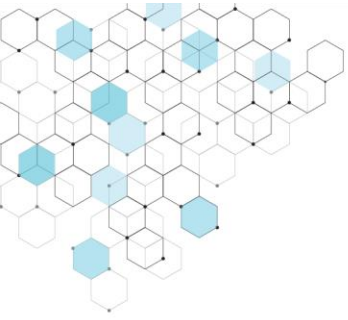
11:15am – 12:15pm



Powering Strong Communities

# Today's Agenda

- 1 Introduction
- 2 About Reliable Public Power Provider (RP<sub>3</sub>) program
- 3 About Smart Energy Provider (SEP) program
- 4 ElectriCities program assistance
- 5 Q&A



# PUBLIC POWER'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## **FUTURE-FOCUSED**

Develop a future-focused mindset



## **STRENGTHEN PUBLIC POWER**

Build public and political support for public power

## **PROVIDE SUPERIOR POWER**

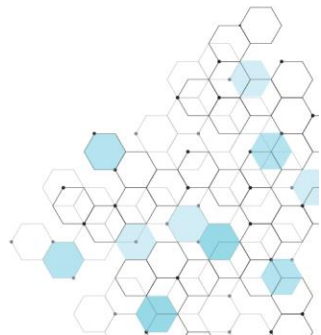
Deliver reliable, affordable, and sustainable electric power

## **CUSTOMER-CENTERED INNOVATION**

Innovate and invest to better serve our customers and communities

## **PEOPLE**

Leverage our people as our greatest asset



# MEASURE MAPPING

# FUTURE-FOCUSED

Develop a future-focused mindset

## SUPPORTING MEASURES

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1. Retail Customer Survey Adoption.
2. Number of members using the Economic Benefit Study or quantifying the value their electric utility provides to their community.
3. RP3 and SEP results in the areas of:
  - a. Long-term planning
  - b. Succession planning
  - c. Employee training



**PUBLIC POWER'S  
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

# MEASURE MAPPING

# CUSTOMER-CENTERED INNOVATION

Innovate and invest to better serve our customers and communities

## SUPPORTING MEASURES

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1. Public power overall customer satisfaction.
2. RP3 and SEP results in the areas of:
  - a. Communications, education, and customer experience
  - b. Energy efficiency and distributed energy resources
  - c. System improvement



**PUBLIC POWER'S  
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

# About APPA

The voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide

We serve our nearly 1,500 utility members & 220 corporate members through:



Offering education and professional development opportunities



Sharing information and building connections across the industry



Advocating for policies and regulations that support public power

# About Reliable Public Power Provider (RP<sub>3</sub>) program

AMERICAN  
**PUBLIC  
POWER**  
ASSOCIATION





Powering Strong Communities

## RP<sub>3</sub> recognizes operational excellence for public power utilities

- ✓ Showcase utility best practices
- ✓ Achieve national recognition for the excellent service
- ✓ Perform an operational self-check by benchmarking on a national level
- ✓ Pave a clear path to long term operational sustainability for utilities



# RP<sub>3</sub> application covers 4 key operational areas

	Disciplines	# of questions	Topics include:
	Reliability	11 questions	Reliability indices collection and use, mutual aid, disaster plans, physical security, and cyber security
	Safety	12 questions	Safety manual use, documented job briefings, accident investigations, arc hazard assessments
	Workforce Development	9 questions	Succession planning, knowledge management, goal setting, professional development, and membership
	System Improvement	7 questions	Research & development program participation, system maintenance, and near-term capital projects



# RP<sub>3</sub> is supervised by the 18-member Review Panel of your peers

## Panel representatives

- Large Utilities
- Medium Utilities
- Small Utilities
- Joint Action Agency or State Association
- Reliability
- Safety
- System Improvement
- Workforce Development
- Transmission & Distribution



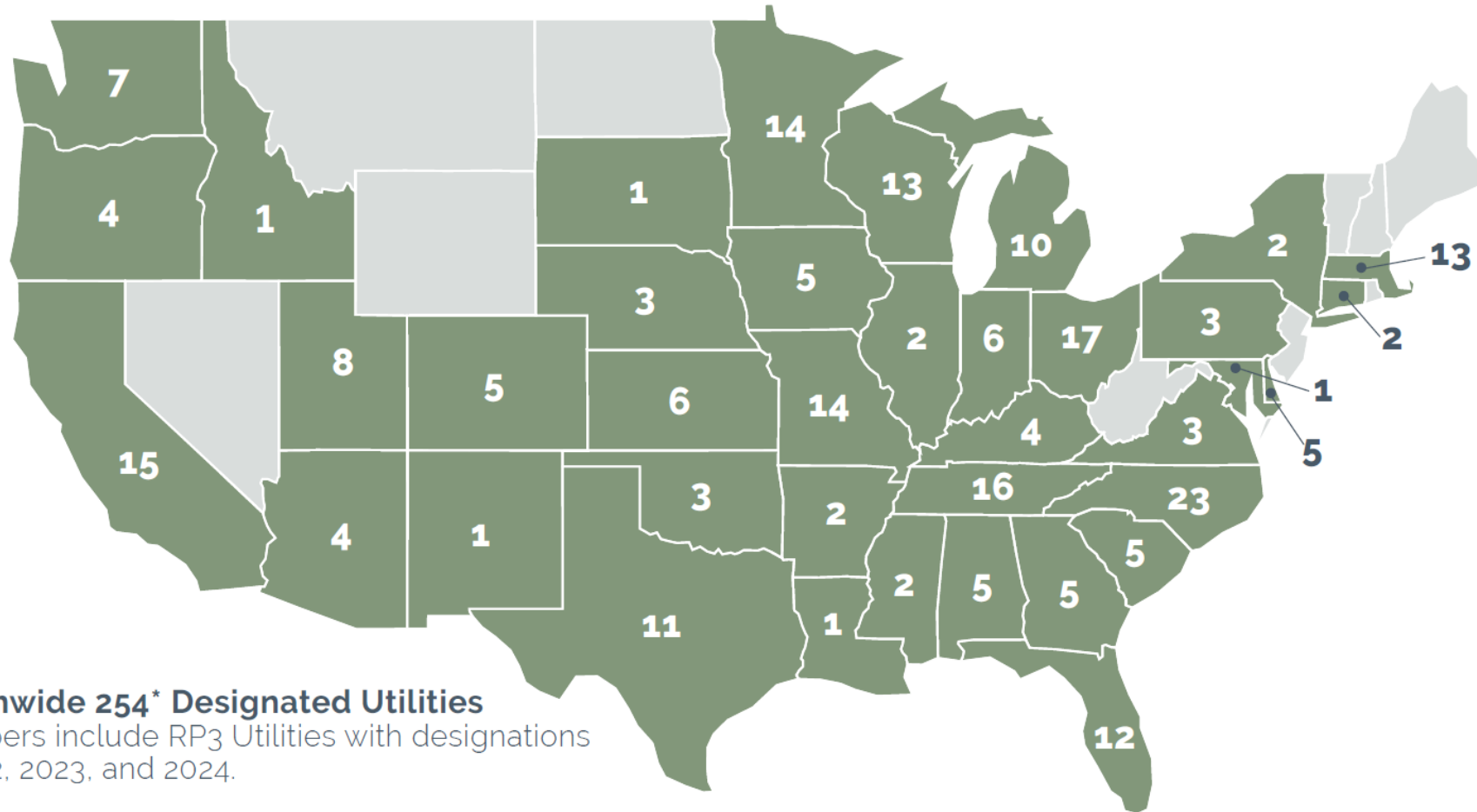
# How are RP<sub>3</sub> designations earned?

Depending on the points attained by each utility, they may be eligible to receive an RP3 Designation:

Designation Level	Points
Diamond	98 - 100
Platinum	90 - <98
Gold	80 - <90

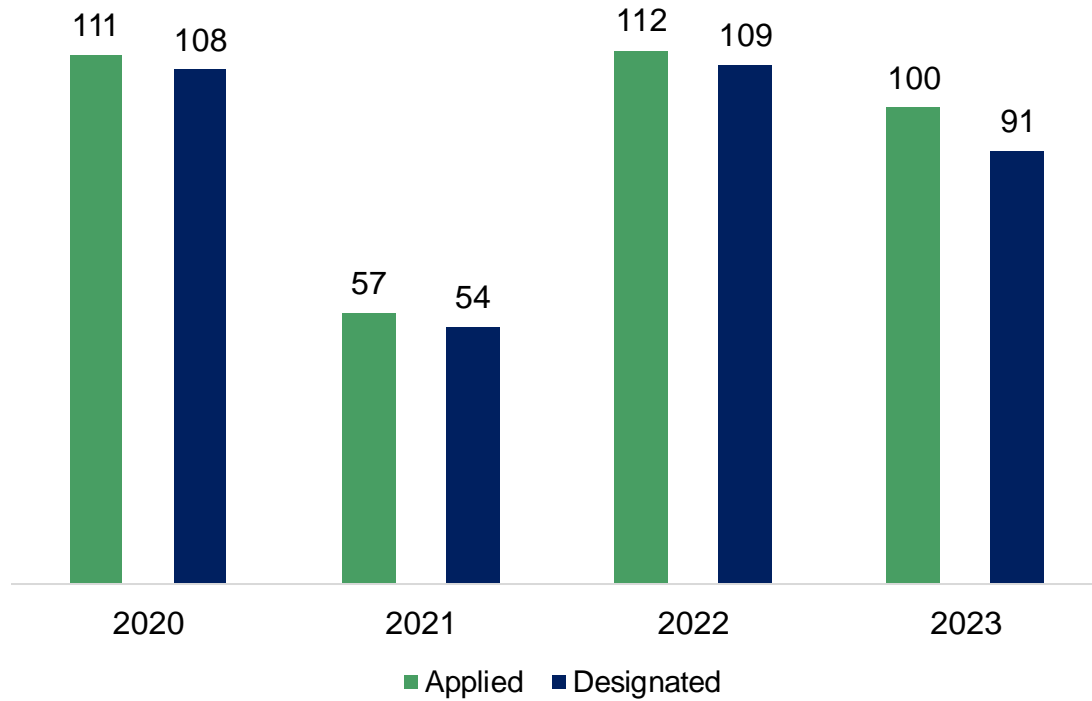
**RP3 designations are valid for 3 years.**

# State representation of RP<sub>3</sub> designees

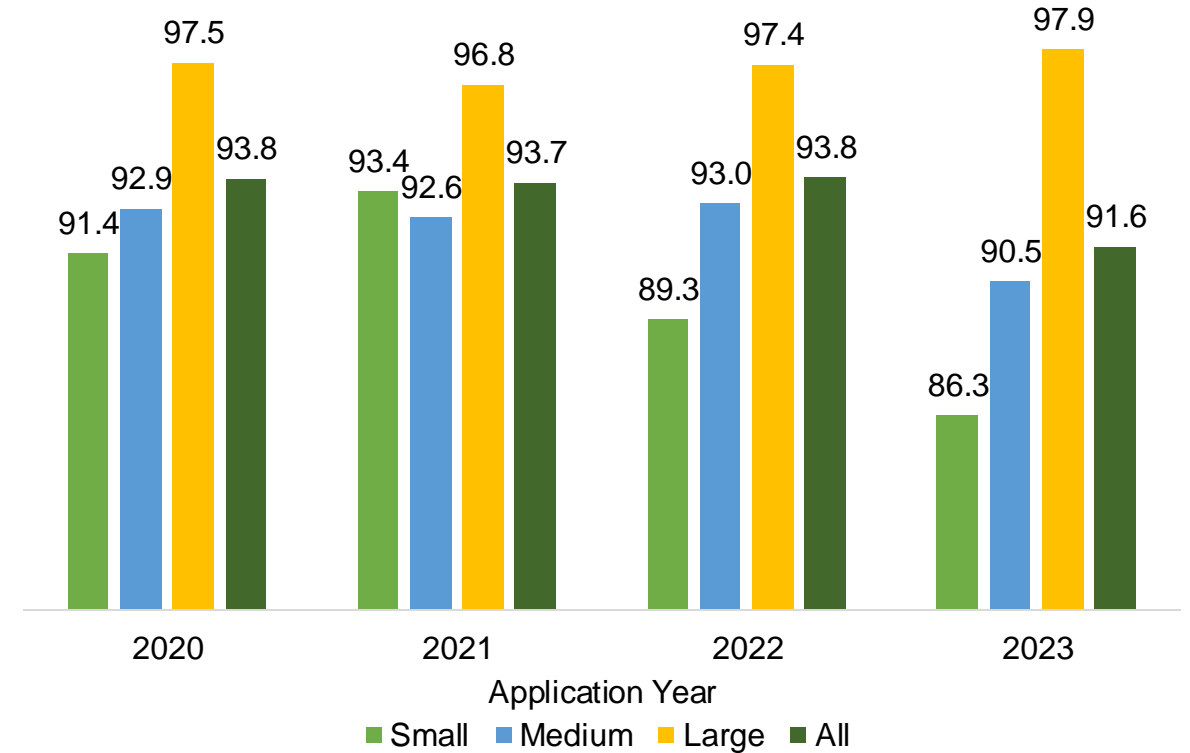


# RP<sub>3</sub> by numbers

Applications and designations, 2020 - 2023



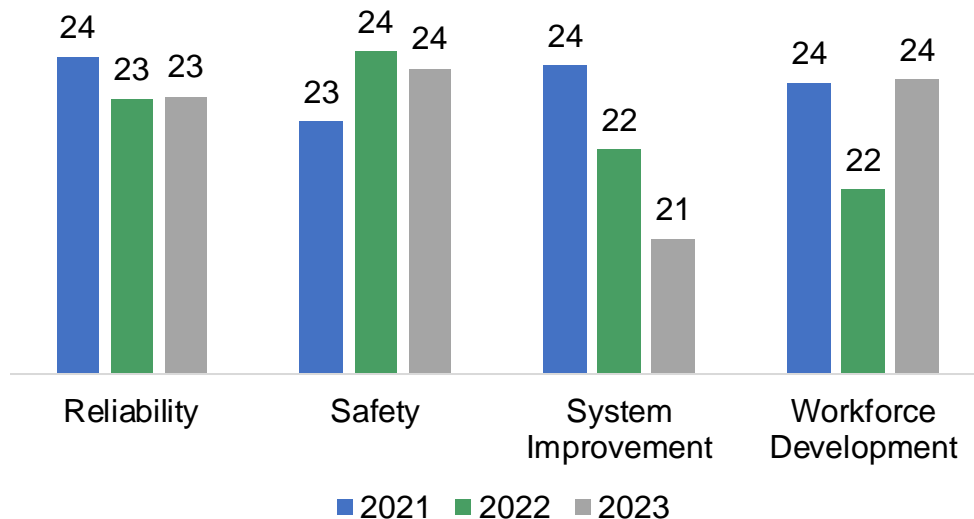
Average final score by utility size, 2020 - 2023



# As of 2024, 28 ElectriCities of North Carolina members hold RP<sub>3</sub> designations

Application year	2021	2022	2023	All three years
Average total score	95	92	92	92

## Average section score, 2021 - 2023



## Areas of excellence, 2021 - 2023

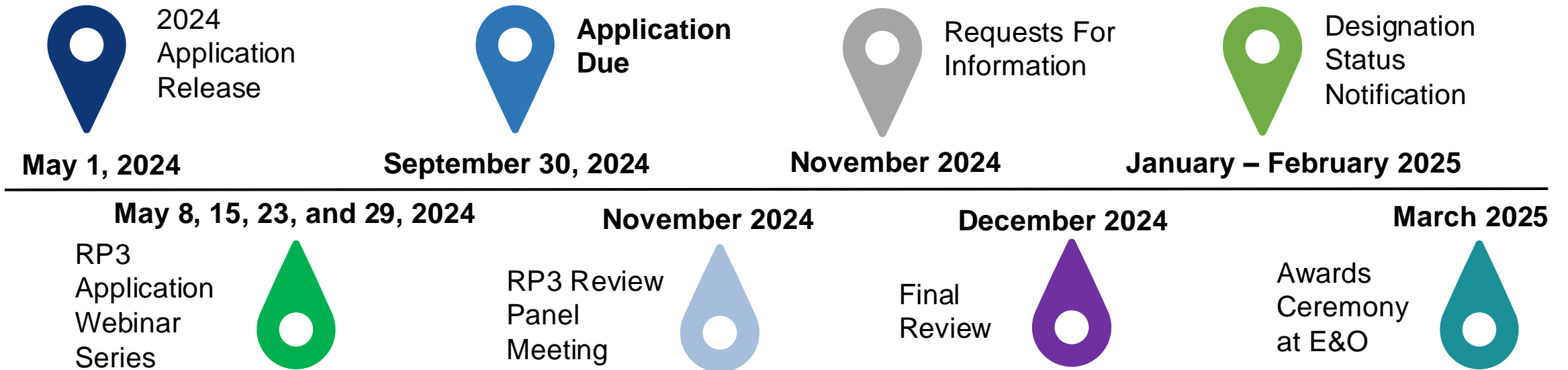
Question	Average Max Points	Average Score	Score as Percent
Accident Investigations	2	2	100%
Demographics	3	3	100%
Employee Recruitment and Retention	2	2	100%

## Areas for improvement, 2021 - 2023

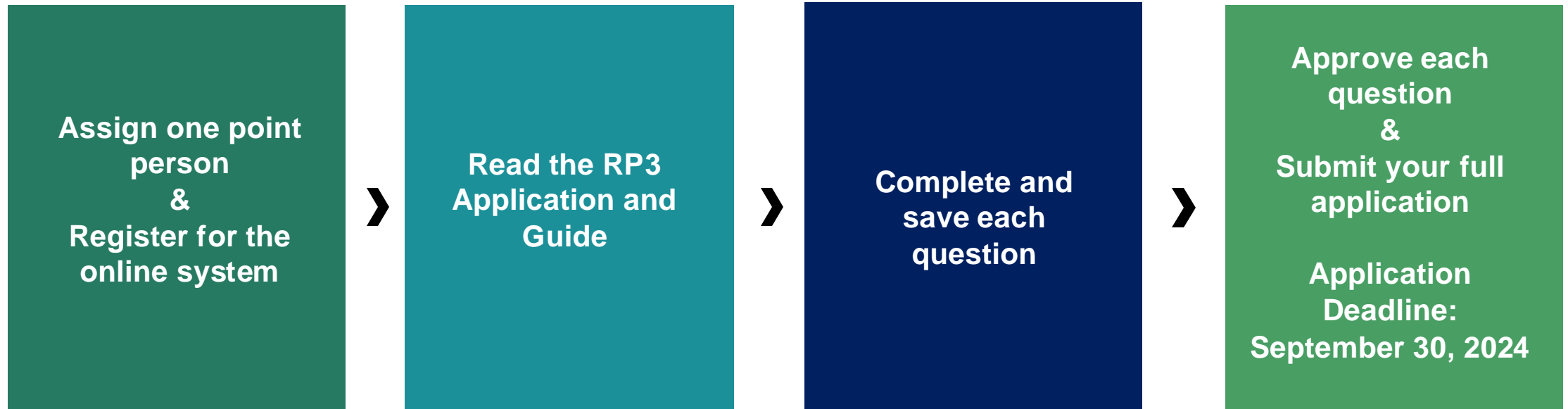
Question	Average Max Points*	Average Score	Score as Percent
Disaster Drills	1.22	0.56	45%
National Safety Benchmarking	2.00	1.56	78%
Planning Study	4.78	3.74	78%

\* Maximum possible points have changed over the last three years.

# 2024 Application process timeline



# Where do you start?



**The 2024 RP3 Application is due September 30, 2024.**

# RP<sub>3</sub> resources

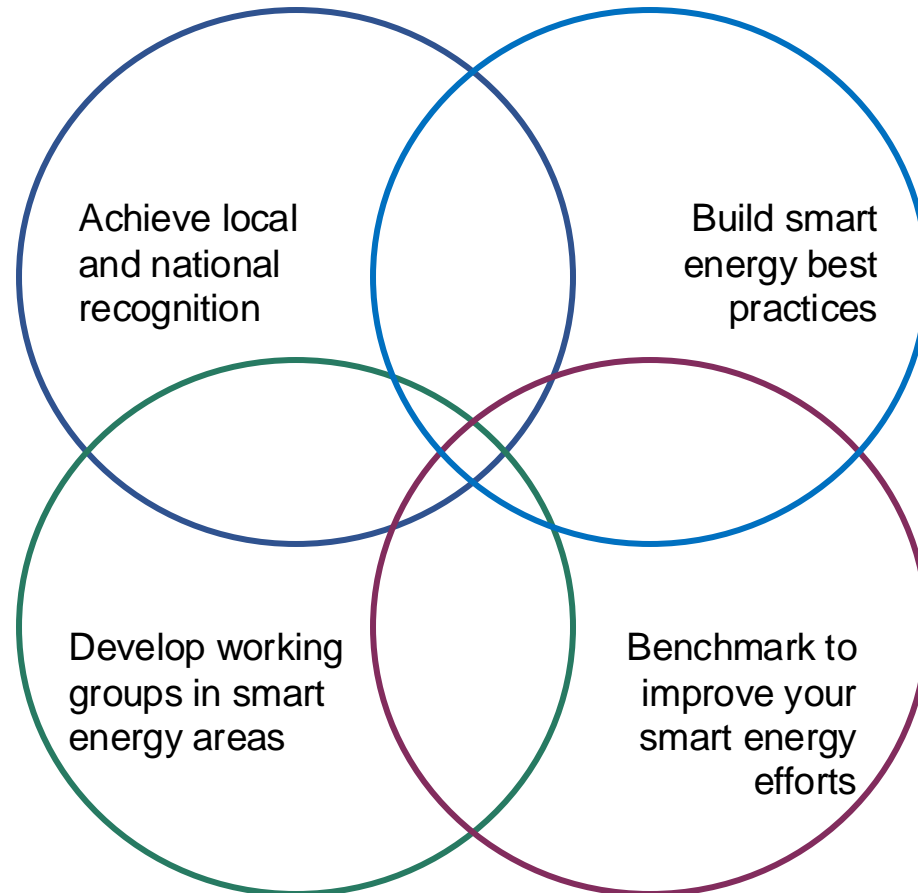
- **Visit** [PublicPower.org/RP3](https://PublicPower.org/RP3) for general information about the program.
- **Access** helpful application resources on our [How to Apply](#) page.
- **Call or email** other RP3 designated utilities.
  - *Preview their application or ask general questions.*
  - *Find Full list of designees on website.*
- **Email** your questions to [RP3@PublicPower.org](mailto:RP3@PublicPower.org).





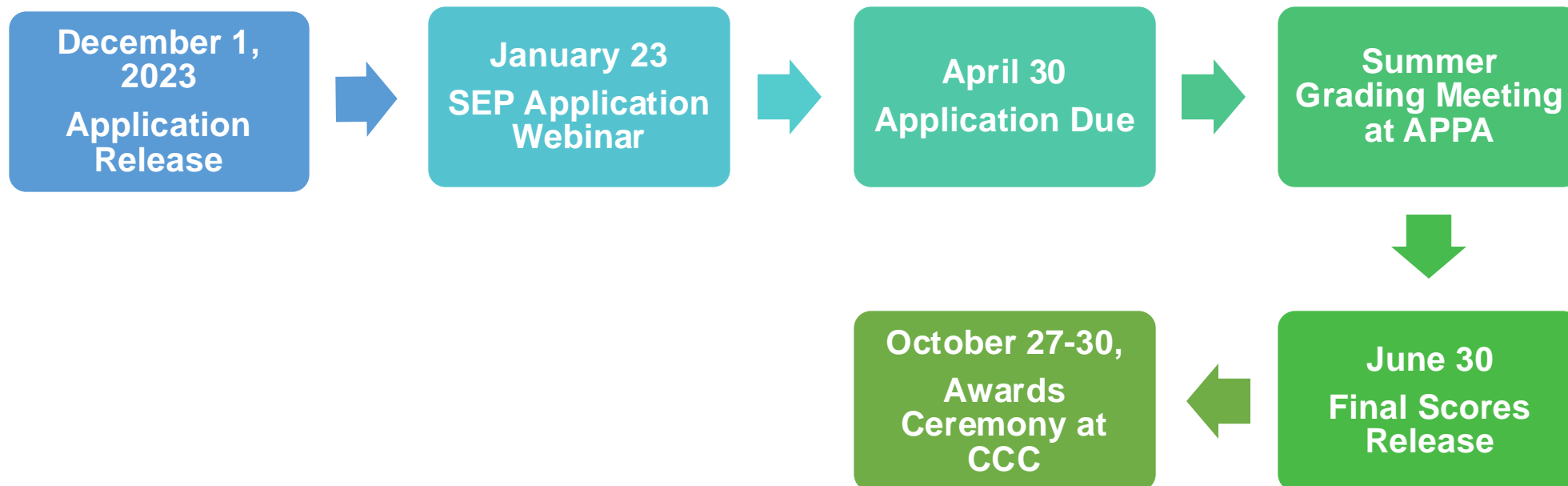
# About Smart Energy Provider (SEP) program

**SEP is a designation for efforts in efficiency, distributed generation, sustainability, and environmental initiatives.**



# How does the SEP program operate?

- SEP is an online application-based program supervised by the **SEP Review Panel**
- The Panel conducts application reviews in the summer and meets at the Customer Connections Conference for a business meeting



# SEP overview

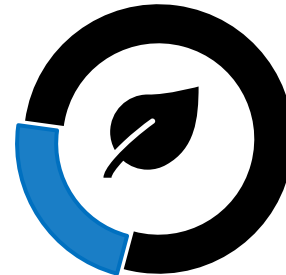
The SEP Application evaluates utility efforts in **four** areas:



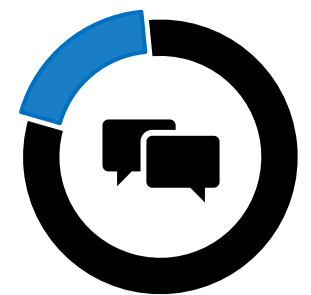
Smart Energy Information  
(21%)



Energy Efficiency &  
Distributed Energy  
Resources (37%)



Environmental & Sustainability  
Programs and Initiatives (23%)



Communication, Education  
& Customer Experience  
(19%)

## SEP Designation

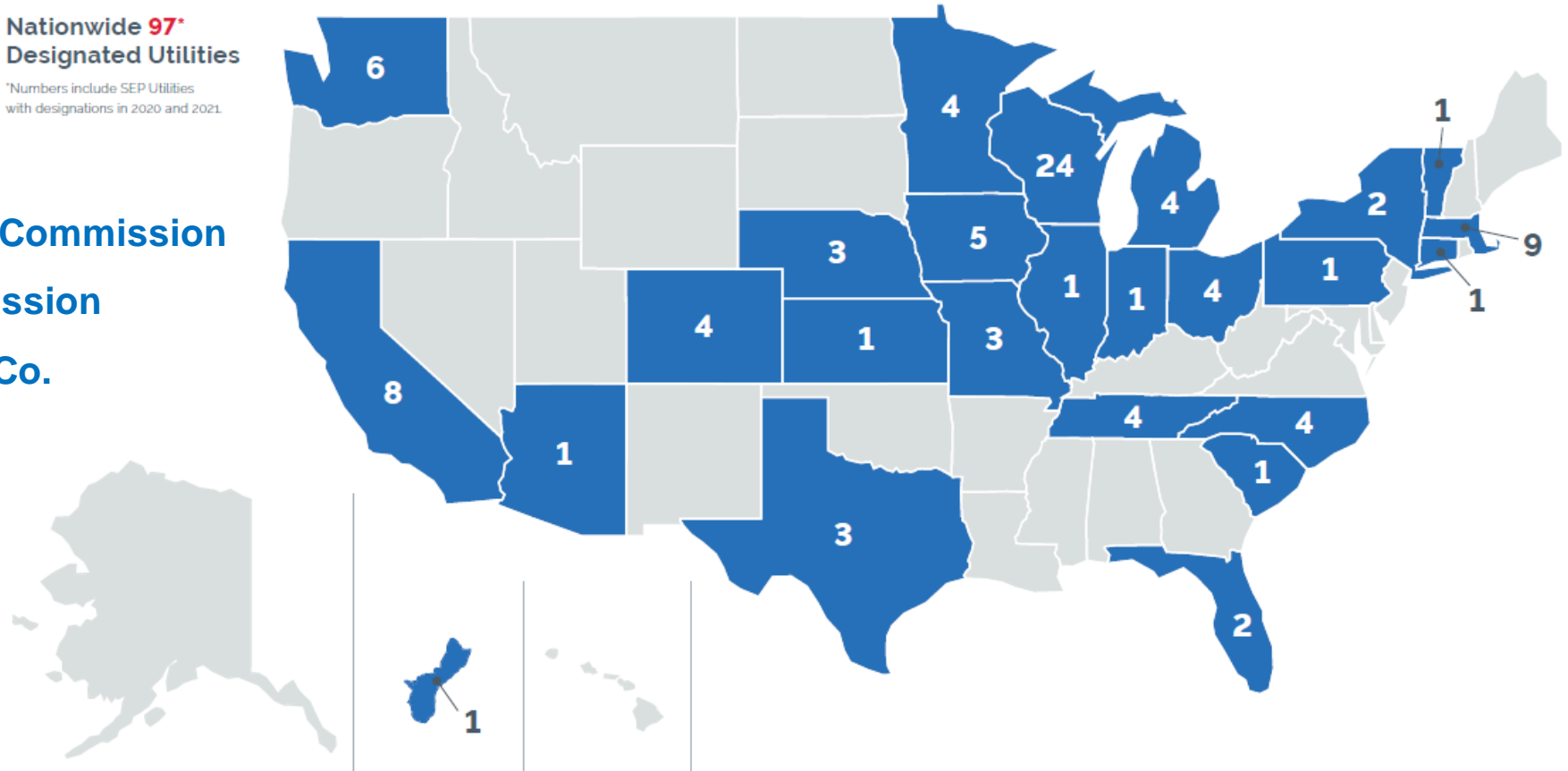
- Lasts for three years (12/1/2025 – 11/30/2028)
- Reports on activities from 5/1/2022 to 4/30/2025
- Is a pass-or-fail system
- A utility with a total score of 70 or higher on their application receives a designation.

# As of today, 4 ElectriCities of North Carolina members hold SEP designations

Nationwide **97\***  
Designated Utilities

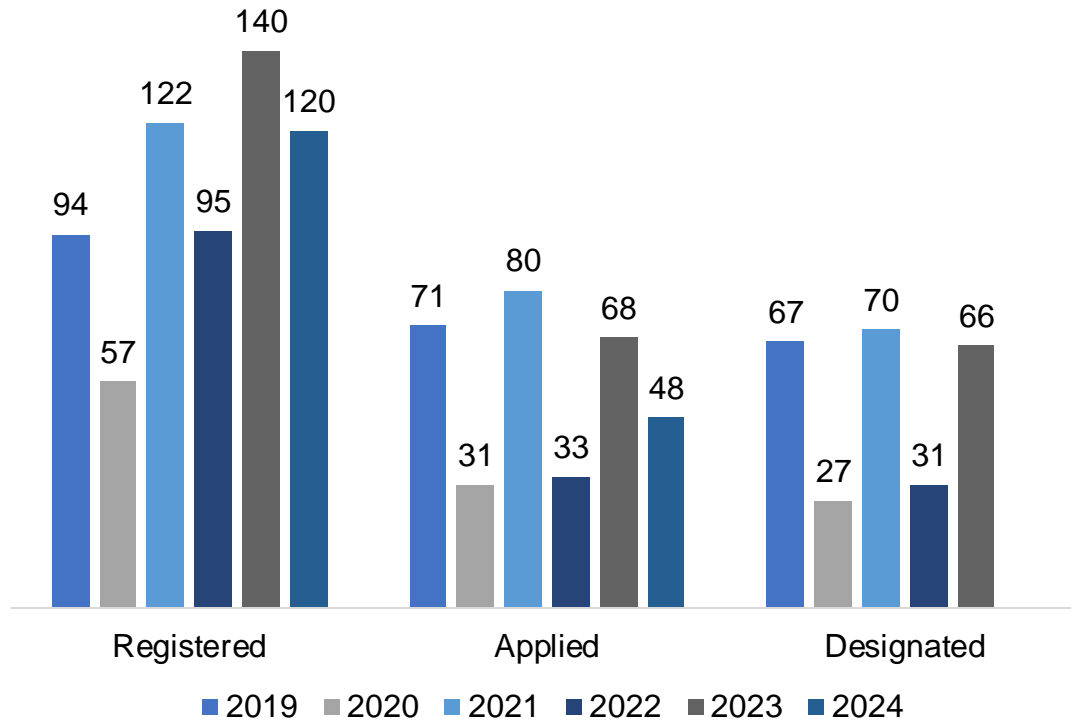
\*Numbers include SEP Utilities  
with designations in 2020 and 2021.

- Fayetteville Public Works Commission
- Greenville Utilities Commission
- New River Light & Power Co.
- Wilson Energy

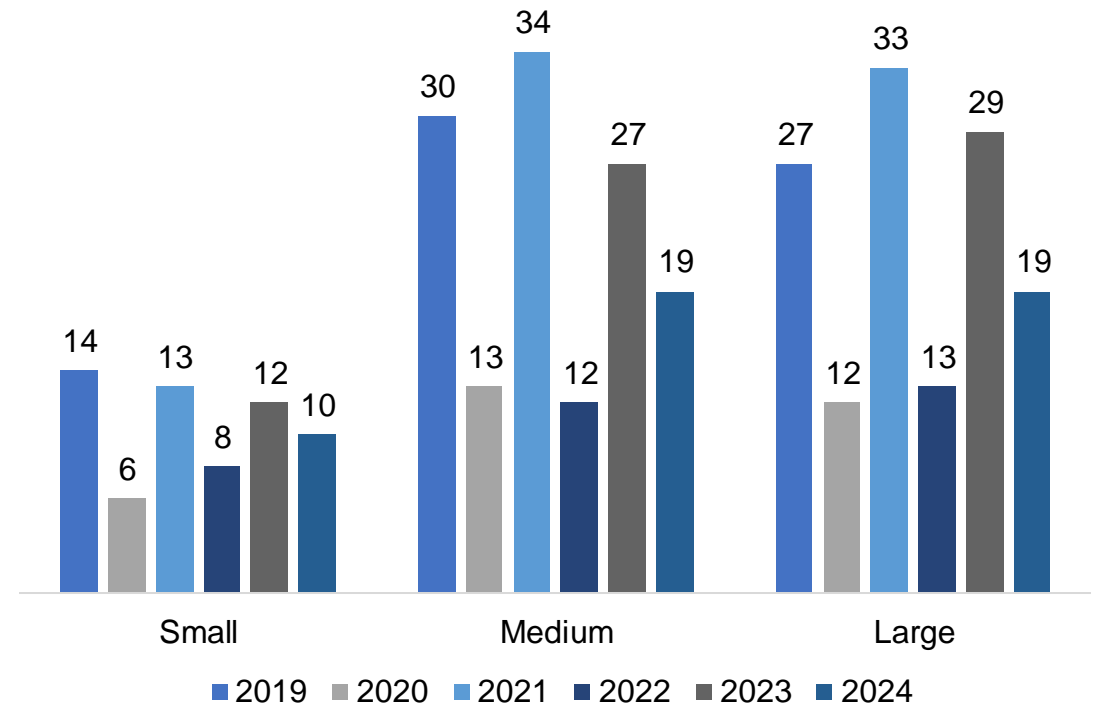


# SEP by numbers

## Registrations, Applications, and Designations, 2019 - 2024



## Applications by utility size, 2019 - 2024



# Average scores show areas of excellence and improvement

## Areas of excellence

Question	Points Possible	Average Points Earned	Score as Percent %
Communication	4	3.99	99.8%
Sustainability Programs	7	6.97	99.6%
Customer Access to Usage Data	1	0.99	98%
Supply-side Programs	3	2.88	96%
E-mobility programs	4	3.79	95%

Source: APPA's 2023 SEP Application

## Areas for improvement

Question	Points Possible	Average Points Earned	Score as Percent %
Emissions Tracking	4	1.71	43%
Emissions Savings	4	1.75	44%
Battery Storage Programs	4	1.78	45%
Equity Programs	2	1.24	62%
Demand Response Programs	4	2.60	65%

Source: APPA's 2023 SEP Application

# Tips for applying

## Answer all parts of the question

Double-check that you've answered all parts of the question. Ask yourself if SEP Review Panel members will be able to easily understand the information you've given.

## Check your attachments

Make sure the SEP Panel can easily understand your attachments by **highlighting** relevant sections, providing the **page numbers** of relevant information, or screenshotting **specific** sections of documents or websites.

## View scoring breakdown

In the top right-hand corner of each online application question, there is a blue box with a “?” inside. Click on this box to read through specific instructions and scoring breakdowns for each question.

## Ask for help

The SEP Staff and Panel are always happy to help! If you would like to review the application with the Panel members, please contact SEP Staff at [SEP@PublicPower.org](mailto:SEP@PublicPower.org),

If you have questions or need assistance during the application process, email [SEP@PublicPower.org](mailto:SEP@PublicPower.org).

# ElectriCities RP<sub>3</sub> Program Assistance: RELIABILITY



## Reliability Tracking & Benchmarking

- eReliability Tracker (eRT) subscriptions
- APPA annual reliability reports
- EC reliability reporting & benchmarking
- Outage Map

**11 points**



## Mutual Aid

- ElectriCities' mutual aid program maintains national leader status
- Proof of program participation
- State & national mutual aid coordination

**3 points**



## Disaster Plan

- Sample disaster plan templates
- Sample disaster drill procedures
- Disaster drill lessons learned

**5 points**



## Physical and Cyber Security

- Referrals to consultants & federal programs
- Minimum requirements lists
- Training referrals
- Collaboration on best practices

**6 points**



# ElectriCities RP<sub>3</sub> Program Assistance: SAFETY



## Safety Manual & Benchmarking

- Promote adoption of APPA's latest Safety Manual (17<sup>th</sup> edition)
- Incorporate APPA Safety Manual guidelines into Safety & Training programs.
- Refer to APPA's sample safety directive, APPA eSafety Tracker, OSHA 300A benchmarking.

**7 points**



## Safety Meetings, Job Briefings, Job Site Inspections

- Facilitate operations & field safety meetings.
- Host webinars teaching how to conduct a job briefing aligned with APPA Safety Manual.
- Offer field crew audits.
- Provide job site inspections with report (upon request).

**11 points**



## Investigations, OSHA Training, Other Safe Work Practices

- Investigate accidents or near miss incidents and provide documentation (upon request).
- Include OSHA annual refresher training in Safety & Training programs (excluding CPR/First Aid) and safety meetings.

**7 points**

# ElectriCities RP<sub>3</sub> Program Assistance: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



## Succession Planning & Recruitment

- University/trade school partnerships
- GI Bill support for Apprenticeship CDP
- Compensation benchmarking surveys
- Consultative services (Models, industry trends, sample policies, referrals)

**14 points**



## Employee Development & Recognition

- Consultative services (templates, models)
- Connect to center for Workforce development
- Consultant referrals
- Career development working groups

**3 points**



## Education, Participation & Service

- Education policies: templates & models
- Networking: User Groups, EC Annual Conference, OST, UDAC, Connections Summit, referrals
- Education: Lineworker CDPs, CS Certification
- Event attendance records, transcripts

**8 points**

# ElectriCities RP<sub>3</sub> Program Assistance: SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT



## Research & Development

- Referrals for R&D grants, research papers & projects, and DEED resources
- Grant application collaboration and facilitation
- Facilitate research projects through university partnerships

**3 points**



## System Maintenance & Betterment

- System loss reporting, retail billing assessments, OST best practices for reducing losses
- Load forecasts, annual revenue projections, and capital planning consultations
- Technology evaluations and referrals

**12 points**



## Financial Health

- Interconnection standards for DERs
- Preferred pricing for Cost-of-Service studies, financial projections, and rate design (contractor)
- Competitive rate analysis, special rate and billing evaluation

**10 points**

# ElectriCities SEP Program Assistance



Powering Strong Communities

## Why SEP?

Recall...

**SEP** is a designation for efforts in efficiency, distributed generation, sustainability, and environmental initiatives

And Realize...

Along with RP3, this is a great measure of where your utility stands with regards to our strategic priorities

Be prepared to....

Find new priorities for existing resources. **SEP** encourages a focus on "best in industry" programs

## New/ Existing Program Development

Survey responses suggest that our retail customers support the programs promoted by **SEP**.

With that, **SEP** can serve as a guide toward adding key business strategy initiatives.

Working together we can:

- Fill in the blanks where we identify gaps in best practices
- Strengthen and promote existing programs
- Move NC Public Power further into a leadership role nationally

# ElectriCities SEP Program Assistance

# ElectriCities SEP Program Assistance

## Application "Grid" Assistance

Map application questions to EC programs

### Example - Question D.4

Do you offer training to customer service representatives (CSRs) on how customers' behaviors affect their energy consumption? (e.g., thermostat setting, heating/cooling days)

### ElectriCities Program(s)

Customer Service Certification Series

CS 101 and 102 in particular

### Potential points - 5

# ElectriCities SEP Program Assistance

## Member Working Group

Form working group to share lessons learned


*-If you haven't already, develop a strategic plan-*

Share best practices in smart energy

*-Communicate programs for renewable options-*

Meet preceding "**SEP**" season - November

# R&D programs covering operational innovation, improvement, & excellence

Program	Topic	Function	Benefit
<p>American Public Power Association</p> 	<p>All key utility operational areas</p>	<p>R&amp;D program that funds and supports research, funding, and education to improve public power utilities' operations and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide grant funding and scholarships</li> <li>• Share research findings and best practices</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Energy Innovator Award</li> </ul>
<p>RELIABLE RP3 PUBLIC POWER PROVIDER American Public Power Association</p>	<p>Reliability, safety, work force development, and system improvement</p>	<p>Best practices designation application that evaluates public power utilities' proficiency in key operational areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve national and local recognition</li> <li>• Build operations best practices</li> <li>• Benchmarking</li> <li>• Peer evaluation</li> </ul>
<p>SMART ENERGY PROVIDER American Public Power Association</p>	<p>Efficiency, DERs, renewable energy, sustainability, and environmental initiatives.</p>	<p>Best practices designation application that evaluates a utility's efforts in smart energy areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve national and local recognition</li> <li>• Build operations and customer program best practices</li> <li>• Benchmarking</li> <li>• Peer evaluation</li> </ul>
<p>eReliabilityTracker</p>	<p>Reliability, and electric power outages and causes, distribution equipment</p>	<p>Web-based application that helps public power utilities record, track, and analyze outage information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional, and utility size-based benchmarking</li> <li>• Cross-utility reliability analysis and reporting</li> <li>• Certificate of Excellence in Reliability</li> </ul>



**Any questions?**

# Thank you!

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