EV CHARGERS IN IDAHO

What’s driving electric vehicles in Idaho?

GROWTH IN IDAHO’S EV MARKET

Experts expect to see a significant boom in electric vehicles, or EVs, over the next decade. Some experts project that electric vehicles will account for 45% of the market in 2035. This year alone, 30 new models of EVs are expected to be released from different automotive brands. Along with those new models comes the estimate that 1 in 20 American car buyers will purchase a fully electric vehicle in 2022.

While Idaho has been slower to adopt EVs, we’re sandwiched between some of the quickest adopters in the nation. California and Washington both rank in the top 5 nationwide for number of electric vehicles — both of which each generated 11% of Idaho’s tourism in 2019, according to the Idaho Department of Commerce.
Idaho residents are also lucky enough to have some of the cleanest and cheapest energy in the nation. According to the Department of Energy, an electric eGallon — or the amount of electricity it takes to get a gallon-of-gas worth of energy — costs about $.90 in Idaho, compared to the national average of $1 per eGallon.

**BRINGING DRIVERS TO YOUR TOWN**

Unlike traditional gasoline vehicles, EVs can take between 40 minutes and several hours to charge, depending on the EV model and the kind of chargers available.

As of early 2022, there are only a handful of fast chargers outside of Idaho’s capital. This has made longer trips away from home less feasible for EV users, who don’t want to spend several hours charging their cars every time they run out of juice. New fast chargers cut down that time to a more manageable 30-40 minutes.

By installing fast chargers in your town, **you can incentivise drivers to stop and explore local businesses, and take advantage of everything your municipality has to offer.** The window of time when drivers are charging their vehicles is long enough that people can get up, roam around, and more likely than not, buy things.

These local fast chargers also give residents of your town access to charging if they can’t install one or don’t want to pay the cost to retrofit their home.
Available funding

Municipalities and businesses can get 80-100% of their direct-current fast charger equipment paid for by applying for a rebate through the Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) program.

The program prioritises areas that are within 0.5 miles of major highway or interstate, and are close to shopping and dining options.

The rebate program refunds participants after fast charger installation, so participants need to be able to pay for the fast-charger first before getting refunded.

Additional funding will also be available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal. Idaho is expected to receive $30 million over five years to support the expansion of our EV charging network, with an additional $2.5 billion in grant funding available as well. This funding will shape Idaho’s new EV charging grid and open up new opportunities for EV drivers to visit all of Idaho.

Public charging stations in Idaho Falls and Caldwell have seen significant use by the community and tourists. The charging stations provide an excuse for drivers to stop and check out a town's restaurants and shops.

With the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal placing an emphasis on rural communities, it should help other small towns in Idaho bring in new business and prepare for the EV growth that experts expect over the next 15 years, as car manufacturers switch to making only electric vehicles.
Starting the process

Municipalities or businesses that are interested in applying can follow these steps to get started.

1. IDENTIFY IF A CHARGER IS RIGHT FOR YOUR TOWN

Before starting the application process, ask yourself the following questions:

1.) Is your town located close to a major highway or interstate?
2.) Are there other fast chargers that are within 30-50 miles of roughly where yours would be located?
3.) Are there local businesses that would benefit from having a fast charger in your town?
4.) Does your town or business have enough funding to pay for the charger upfront?

2. FIGURE OUT WHERE THE CHARGER SHOULD BE LOCATED

Applicant sites that are within .5 miles of a major highway will be priorities for funding. That said, the charger should be in a parking lot where it is both close to the highway and close to local amenities like restaurants, shops, and shops.

It's also important that the charger is ADA compliant, accessible from all directions, in an area that's well lit and has cell phone coverage. It also needs to be accessible at all times of the day.
The EVSE program will only rebate up to 80% of the cost of chargers on private land, versus up to 100% on public lands. That said, it’s important to consider whether your municipality or business is willing to pay for that extra 20% if you’re planning on placing the charger on private property.

3. CONTACT YOUR ELECTRIC UTILITY & THE STATE

Once you’ve settled on a location, call your local electric utility and talk to them about the feasibility of building the fast charger on this location. After they’ve given you the green line, contact the Idaho Office of Energy and Mineral Resources to chat about your initial pitch. Their thoughts should give you a good idea of how well your application will fair.

**TIP:** The application is going to ask you to provide a “Description of the existing electrical service to the site, what upgrades may be needed, and preliminary cost estimates for those upgrades.” It also requires that “Documentation must be coordinated with your local utility and needs to include the name of your utility representative.” **Starting this process with your public utility district early might save you time down the line.**

4. FILL OUT THE APPLICATION

The full rebate application can be found on the [Idaho Department of Environmental Quality website](http://www.deq.idaho.gov). You can contact Emily Her, Policy Analyst at the Governor’s Office of Energy Resources, at (208) 332-1663 or emily.her@oer.idaho.gov for more information and guidance.
5. **WAIT FOR APPROVAL**

The application approval process will likely take between 3-4 months. **Any work done on the site before the application is approved will not be eligible for rebate funding** even if it is included in the application and relates to the charging materials. That said, be sure to wait until you’ve received approval to start on the project.

**Additional Information**

**EV NETWORK**

While installing a fast charger in your municipality benefits the overall cash flow to local businesses, you’re also helping build out a larger network of EV charging stations. Nationwide, federal stakeholders have set aside enough grant money for 500,000 chargers across U.S. highways. By completing this network, EV drivers will have more incentives to visit different parts of the state, **bringing new people to your community.**

Traffic numbers across Idaho’s highways have been significantly increasing over the past decade. Viewing these car counts for your area
on the Idaho Department of Transportation website can give you an idea of the potential of how many new cars could start stopping to charge in your town as consumers switch to EVs.

**INNOVATIONS IN EV TECHNOLOGY**

New models of EV could result in more EV owners in Idaho. Local dealerships are already getting substantial pre-orders for the electric Ford F-Series Lightening, which Ford plans to release in late-Spring. With the most torque ever for an F-150 – a top seller in Idaho – as well as the ability to power your home for three days and a 230-300 mile range, it’s easy to see why Idaho roads will be seeing more Ford Lightnings in the near future.

Overall EVs are also better on Idahoans wallets. The cost to “fill up” an EV is about $1 per gallon, compared to the consistent fluctuation in price of gasoline. Gas prices have also risen by 41% from 2015 ($2.13 per gallon) to December 2021 ($3.61 per gallon). By switching to electric, consumers have more control over what they’re paying for their fuel. **All that said, the average EV owner is estimated to save about $600 a year in fuel and $8,000 over the life of the vehicle.**
Frequently asked questions

**How much should I charge per kW?**

The amount you should charge will depend on the base kW rate from your local utility and the other costs that you need to cover. The following example should give you an idea of how to calculate the cost:

The base rate for an Idaho Power user is **$0.1050 per kW**. When determining this rate you’ll want to find an yearly average and round up.

Now, you'll need to find an average for upkeep and maintenance costs. That should be **around $400 annually**, based on estimates by the U.S. Department of Energy.

After that, use [Idaho Department of Transportation data](https://www.itsIdaho.gov) to determine roughly how many cars drive through the major highways near your town. Say that number is a minimum of 3 million cars per month.

From there you can figure out roughly how much you should charge per kW to pay for any maintenance costs, while still keeping prices low to incentivise people to visit.