

Notice of Intent No. DE-FOA-0001468

Notice of Intent to Issue Funding Opportunity Announcement No. DE-FOA-0001415

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) intends to issue, on behalf of the Weatherization and Intergovernmental Programs Office, a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) entitled “State Energy Program 2016 Competitive Awards”.

This FOA supports the mission of the State Energy Program (SEP) by providing leadership to maximize the benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy through technology deployment, communications and outreach activities, and access to new partnerships and resources. Through SEP, DOE provides formula and competitive funding assistance to States. States use formula awards to address their energy priorities through programs and policies that accelerate adoption of emerging energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. DOE provides competitive awards to support policy and project developments that are highly leveraged and sustainable.

DOE seeks to fund projects in three Areas of Interest (AOI): 1) State Energy Planning; 2) Opportunities for Innovative Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Practices; and 3) Technical Assistance to Advance SEP Formula Grant Clean Energy Activities. It is anticipated that DOE will award up to \$5.0 million in total funding in the FOA, subject to FY2016 Congressional appropriations.

Multistate applications where other States are listed as key partners or subrecipients are encouraged under Area of Interest 1 and Area of Interest 2. Multistate applications will not be accepted under Area of Interest 3.

The maximum number of proposals a state may submit as the Prime recipient is one, however states eligible to apply for AOI3 may submit an additional application to that Area of Interest. A State may also serve as a subrecipient/partner on multistate/regional proposals under AOI 1 or AOI 2.

It is anticipated that the FOA may include the following Areas of Interest:

Area of Interest 1 – State Energy Planning

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Through this funding, DOE aims to bolster State energy planning by funding efforts to facilitate stakeholder and interagency discussions concerning (1) the future direction of the energy sector and (2) how energy efficiency and renewable energy fit into the vision for the future. DOE funding will help States explore and enhance economic development opportunities associated with promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, identify measures for enhancing energy assurance, undertake relevant analytical efforts, and plan strategically for current and future environmental regulations and other economic pressures that will have an impact on the energy sector.

Ideal proposals will:

- Identify the extent to which the State already uses energy efficiency and renewable energy as part of their energy resource mix;
- Present a coordinated vision amongst State agencies with purview over the energy sector for energy planning that can help meet State policy goals, including environmental policy goals, reliability and resiliency, and economic development goals;
- Include estimated energy, GHG, and cost savings along with sufficient technical detail to assess whether estimates are valid and attainable;
- Address sustainability and replicability of the project post-grant period; and
- Demonstrate how new or existing partnerships with key stakeholders (ex. local governments, utilities, state regulatory agencies, third party administrators, etc.) will be successfully created or expanded.

Area of Interest 2 – Opportunities for Innovative Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Practices

Under this Area of Interest, DOE will offer funding to States for the development of new, or the expansion of existing, programs or policies that advance energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption within a portfolio of five Topics of Emphasis:

- 1) Working with Utilities to Advance State Energy Reduction and/or Renewable Energy Generation Goals
- 2) Enabling Financing Mechanisms for Public or Private Sector Clean Energy Investment
- 3) Deploying Energy Performance Benchmarking and Disclosure
- 4) Standardizing Evaluation Measurement & Verification (EM&V) Processes
- 5) Partnering with Local Governments

The five Topics of Emphasis listed above - and the expanded descriptions below - are related to specific questions identified in the '2016 State Energy Assessment'. In the State Energy Program's (SEP's) Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for the Fiscal Years (FY) 2014 and 2015 Competitive Awards, applicants were asked to complete a State Energy Assessment.

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SEP anticipates that the questions in the 2016 State Energy Assessment will be similar to those in the 2015 State Energy Assessment. For this year's FOA, applicants to Area of Interest 2 should familiarize themselves with these specific policy questions within the 5 topic areas above prior to crafting proposals and consider how the proposal could change an answer from a 'no' to a 'yes.'

Topic 1: Working with Utilities to Advance State Energy Reduction and/or Renewable Energy Generation Goals

Under this topical area, applicants may submit proposals with strategies to meet or advance State energy reduction and/or renewable energy generation goals by partnering with utilities in the following areas: addressing demand response; implementing cost effectiveness testing to maximize the value of energy efficiency in state policies; adopting or expanding new or existing standards (i.e. through an EERS, a RPS, or an IRP); standardizing interconnection rules; or expanding ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs.

Topic 2: Enabling Financing Mechanisms for Public or Private Sector Clean Energy Investment

Under this topical area, applicants may submit proposals with strategies to develop or expand an energy specific financial policy or initiative to incent public or private clean energy investment. Possible projects include the following: designing and developing templates for the creation of financing programs; enacting legislation in support of commercial property assessed clean energy (PACE) and/or a clean energy loan fund; or enacting legislation that authorizes the use of a centralized State ESPC program for public buildings that requires the use of standardized contracts and procedures.

Topic 3: Deploying Energy Performance Benchmarking and Disclosure

Under this topical area, applicants may submit proposals with strategies to develop or expand laws or regulations, executive orders, utility data collection processes or energy use data exchange mechanisms related to benchmarking and disclosure of energy use in public or private buildings.

Topic 4: Standardizing Evaluation Measurement & Verification (EM&V) Processes

Under this topical area, applicants may submit proposals with strategies to develop or expand processes related to standardized evaluation, measurement and verification (EM&V) practices to determine energy and emissions reductions from ratepayer and/or non-ratepayer funded efficiency programs.

Topic 5: Partnering with Local Governments

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Under this topical area, applicants may submit proposals with strategies to develop or expand policies and programs to support local governments in designing and implementing internal and/or publically facing clean energy programs.

Note: The following programs are NOT permitted in proposals under this Area of Interest:

- 1) Programs that use project funds to implement specific project-level energy efficiency retrofits and upgrades. (However, States could use project funds to design and develop programs that could lead to retrofits implemented with non-project funds); and
- 2) Programs that use project funds to capitalize financing programs. (However, States could use project funds to design and develop templates for the creation of financing programs).

Area of Interest 3 – Technical Assistance to Advance SEP Formula Grant Clean Energy Activities

Under this Area of Interest, DOE will offer funding to States for technical assistance activities that maximize the impact of formula grant work related to energy efficiency and/or renewable energy adoption. In order to better serve all States under the SEP purview, Area of Interest 3 is open to those States that have not received a SEP competitive award in the last four years (FY12-FY15).

States may request technical assistance related to increasing the impact or expanding the scope of an existing area of formula work **OR** may request technical assistance to explore new areas for possible inclusion in future annual formula award applications. If tied to an existing area of formula work, States must show how the technical assistance requested will lead to greater impact of the project as conceived while providing assurance that current work will be able to continue as planned and is not dependent on the technical assistance requested. The State's preferred technical assistance provider/s must be identified in the application, and could include consultant/s, or a DOE-funded national lab—such as NREL, LBNL, and ORNL or universities.

Ideal proposals will contain the following elements:

- Identification of past, present and future plans related to an existing area in the State's formula work for which technical assistance is being requested **OR** degree to which the proposal clearly describes future plans related to a new area of formula work.
- Description of a clear tie between the technical assistance requested and an existing area in the State's formula work including previous State efforts and how the approach intends to build off of those efforts including incorporating lessons learned **OR** how the technical

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assistance requested will enable the State to integrate a new activity into its formula portfolio in a future year.

- A demonstrated understanding of the key barriers involved that have hindered successful execution of past formula work or could impede a new area of formula work.
- Demonstration that (1) the technical assistance requested will help the State make measurable progress in reducing energy consumption or increasing renewable energy deployment and (2) that there will be a focus on creating mechanisms for accurately evaluating and measuring program impact.

EERE envisions awarding multiple financial assistance awards in the form of cooperative agreements. The estimated period of performance for each award will be approximately 2 years for Area of Interest 1, between 2-3 years for Area of Interest 2 and 2 years for Area of Interest 3.

This Notice is issued so that interested parties are aware of the EERE's intention to issue this FOA in the near term. Please note that DOE will require applicants under Areas of Interest 1 and 2 to include letters of support from partners with their applications. Applicants under Area of Interest 3 will be required to submit a letter from the entity that will provide the technical assistance.

All of the information contained in this Notice is subject to change. EERE will not respond to questions concerning this Notice. Once the FOA has been released, EERE will provide an avenue for potential Applicants to submit questions.

EERE plans to issue the FOA on or about January 15, 2016 via the EERE Exchange website <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/>. If Applicants wish to receive official notifications and information from EERE regarding this FOA, they should register in EERE Exchange. When the FOA is released, applications will be accepted only through EERE Exchange.

In anticipation of the FOA being released, Applicants are advised to complete the following steps, which are **required** for application submission:

- Register and create an account in EERE Exchange at <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/>. This account will allow the user to register for any open EERE FOAs that are currently in EERE Exchange. It is recommended that each organization or business unit, whether acting as a team or a single entity, use only one account as the contact point for each submission.

Questions related to the registration process and use of the EERE Exchange website should be submitted to: EERE-ExchangeSupport@hq.doe.gov.

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- Obtain a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number (including the plus 4 extension, if applicable) at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
- Register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>. Designating an Electronic Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) and obtaining a special password called an MPIN are important steps in SAM registration. Please update your SAM registration annually.
- Register in FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net/>. To create an organization account, your organization's SAM MPIN is required. For more information about the SAM MPIN or other registration requirements, review the FedConnect Ready, Set, Go! Guide at https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/Marketing/Documents/FedConnect_Ready_Set_Go.pdf.
- Register in Grants.gov to receive automatic updates when Amendments to a FOA are posted. However, please note that applications will not be accepted through Grants.gov. <http://www.grants.gov/>. All applications must be submitted through EERE Exchange.

It is anticipated that the following Optional webinars may be offered to all States:

- FY2016 Informational FOA Webinar on or about January 27th and January 28th, 2016
- A SEP Competitive FOA Grant Application Workshop on or about February 2, 2016 for the purpose of providing guidance on how to develop responsive applications. The Workshop will utilize an interactive discussion format.

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