



## Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

# Inflation Reduction Act – Transmission Siting and Economic Development (TSED) Program DE-FOA-0003101

### Frequently Asked Questions

October 31, 2023

*Recent changes to the FAQs have been highlighted in yellow.*

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## Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Amendment Updates

### 1. What is the difference between FOA Modification 000001 and the original FOA?

FOA Modification 000001 extends the due date regarding concept paper submission for the first phase to 5 PM ET, November 17, 2023, and adds two additional phases of concept paper and full application submissions and awards.

## Application Process and Requirements

### 2. Where do I apply for the FOA?

- I. To access application forms and instructions, visit the Clean Energy Infrastructure Funding Opportunity eXCHANGE (<https://infrastructure-eXCHANGE.energy.gov>), and then select the appropriate funding opportunity number, DE-FOA-0003101.
- II. Questions related to the FOA can be submitted to the FOA inbox at [FOA3101@netl.doe.gov](mailto:FOA3101@netl.doe.gov).

### 3. What's the timeline for the application and review period?

- a. Concept Paper submissions are due no later than 5 PM ET on November 17, 2023.
- b. Full Application submissions will be due no later than 5 PM ET on April 4, 2024.

### 4. What actions do I need to take before starting my application?

- I. The registration requirements include several one-time actions that must be completed before applying to the FOA. It is vital that applicants address these items as soon as possible.
- II. Register for free with System of Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>
- III. Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). If you don't have a UEI you will register for one in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov>). The UEI is available in the SAM entity registration record. Subawardees/subrecipients at all tiers must also obtain an UEI from the SAM and provide the UEI to the award Recipient before the subaward can be issued. If the applicant has already obtained a UEI for another Federal grant, they do not need to do this step again. That UEI may be used for this FOA. The UEI replaces the DUNS number that was previously required for Federal grants. It may take up to several weeks to receive a UEI. Otherwise qualified entities will not be able to submit applications unless they are fully registered in SAM.
- IV. Register with Clean Energy Infrastructure Funding Opportunity Exchange (INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE) at <https://infrastructure-eXCHANGE.energy.gov>, online application portal.
- V. Applicants must register with FedConnect to receive an Award at [www.fedconnect.net](http://www.fedconnect.net) Register in Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) to receive automatic updates when Amendments to this FOA are posted. Please note that Full Applications will not be accepted through Grants.gov.



5. What are the required application documents?

The required content and format for the full application is listed in Section IV.E.i. of the FOA. Subsection E. provides detailed guidance on the content and form of each component of the application.

6. What should be included in the budget justification workbook?

- I. Applicants must complete the Budget Justification Workbook, which is included as an attachment to the announcement for use and to describe the level of detail required in the budget justification. Although the data requested is mandatory, the use of the budget justification workbook is not. Applicants must provide the information requested in each tab of the Budget Justification Workbook for the project as a whole, including all work to be performed by the prime recipient and any subrecipients and contractors. Applicants should include costs associated with implementing the various requirements (e.g., Buy America Requirements for Infrastructure projects, Community Benefits Plan, reporting, oversight) and with required annual audits and incurred cost proposals in their proposed budget documents. Such costs may be reimbursed as a direct or indirect cost. The “Instructions and Summary” included with the Budget Justification Workbook will auto-populate as the applicant enters information into the Workbook. Applicants must carefully read the “Instructions and Summary” tab provided within the Budget Justification Workbook.
- II. Save the Budget Justification Workbook in a single Microsoft Excel file using the following naming convention for the title “ControlNumber\_LeadOrganization\_Budget\_Justification”.

7. In relation to resumes, it doesn’t specify the font type to be used; it only mentions that it shouldn't be smaller than 11-point font. Just to confirm, would the font type used not matter?

There is no mandatory font type however the font must be no smaller than 11-point font as indicated in the FOA.

8. What is the general review process for applications?

Concept Papers and Full Applications will be reviewed for compliance and responsiveness (refer to Section III.C. and III.D. of the FOA). Concept Papers that successfully pass the compliance/responsive review will be evaluated based on the concept paper technical review criteria contained in Section V.A.i. of the FOA. Based on the review, Applicants will then receive an Encourage/Discourage Notification for proceeding to the Full Application phase. Full Applications will be evaluated based on the technical review criteria set forth in Section V.A.ii. of the FOA. Based on the review, Applicants will receive either a successful or unsuccessful notification.



9. Please provide an exact page number where the project objectives for Area of Interest 1 (AOI 1) are described in Section IV.

Objectives for AOI 1 begin on p. 2 of the current version of the FOA dated August 29, 2023. Section IV of the FOA addresses the form and content of the technical application. Merit review criteria, for AOI 1, can be found at Section V starting on p. 52.

The merit review criteria listed for Area of Interest 1 (siting and permitting) indicate that the technical merit of an application, which constitutes 50% of the basis for evaluating applications under Area of Interest 1, will be evaluated in part based on the “Degree to which the activities proposed are likely to improve the chances of successful siting and permitting of a covered transmission project.”

In addition, as the FOA indicates in Section 1, part B (currently on p. 3), all siting and permitting projects approved for funding under subpart (E) of Section 50152(b)(1), “other measures and actions,” should “improve the chances of, and shorten the time required for, approval.”

10. Does the prime applicant need to remain static from the concept paper to the final application, or is it allowable for the prime applicant status to be transferred from one eligible entity to another for a given project (control number) between the concept paper and the final application.

If the prime applicant changes from Concept Paper to Full Application on a proposed project, the new applicant will still need to meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Section III of the FOA and the proposed approach/idea would need to remain the same from Concept Paper to Full Application.

## Eligibility

11. How will Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) receive funding?

FFRDC’s will receive funding via sub-awards issued by the prime recipient. Please refer to FOA Section III.E.iii. for guidance with respect to this question.

12. Is DE-FOA-0003101 applicable for entities such as state Public Utility Commissions or a governor’s Office of Economic Development?

- I. Area of Interest 1 pertains to siting and permitting activities, and eligible applicants are restricted to state, Tribal, or local siting authorities. A PUC that functions as a state siting authority is eligible to apply for funds to support siting and permitting activities under Area of Interest 1. However, a governor’s office that does not function as a state siting authority is not an eligible applicant for a siting and permitting grant under Area of Interest 1.
- II. Area of Interest 2 pertains to economic development activities in impacted communities, and eligible applicants include all non-federal government entities. Either a PUC or a governor’s office is eligible to apply for funds to support economic development activities under Area of Interest 2.
- III. Please refer to Section III.A. of the FOA.



13. Can an electric distribution company or transmission operator apply with a state siting agency for economic development projects and funding?

Yes, if the prime applicant is an eligible entity and chooses to enter into such a partnership. For economic development activities applied for under Area of Interest 2 of the FOA, the prime applicant must be a siting authority or any other state, local, or Tribal governmental entity.

14. If the applicant for an economic development award is a siting authority that has issued a final decision, but construction has not started, but will start prior to the selection timeline, is the applicant eligible to apply for an economic development grant?

Per FOA Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, A. Background and Context:

A siting authority may apply for a grant for economic development activities (under Area of Interest 2) once it has approved the applicable covered transmission project and prior to commencement of construction.

A siting authority may also apply for and receive an award for economic development activities prior to having approved a covered transmission project. However, while DOE can award a grant to a siting authority prior to the siting authority approving a covered transmission project, DOE cannot authorize disbursement of the grant funds to a siting authority until the siting authority has issued a siting approval decision.

Regarding a grant to a siting authority for economic development activities, DOE does not need to wait until construction has commenced to disburse grant funds to a siting authority. The requirement regarding commencement of construction only applies to applicants for economic development grants that are not siting authorities.

15. Can universities be sub-recipients to the Prime Recipient under this FOA?

Yes, universities can be subrecipient to the Prime Recipient under this FOA.

16. Would a private developer be able to partner with a public agency/siting authority in order to apply?

The Prime Applicant for any grant under this program must be either a siting authority or, for economic development grants under Area of Interest 2, state, local, or Tribal governmental entity. However, private entities such as developers, non-profit organizations, or community-based groups may partner with an eligible entity to apply for a grant.

17. Is it correct that a state regulatory siting authority can only apply for a grant after an application for a “covered transmission project” has been filed with that authority?

Per FOA Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, A. Background and Context, a siting authority may apply for a grant for siting and permitting activities related to a “covered transmission project” (FOA Area of Interest 1) once an entity has applied, or informed a



siting authority of such entity's intent to apply, for regulatory approval. Similarly, a siting authority may apply for a grant for economic development activities (FOA Area of Interest 2) once an entity has applied, or informed a siting authority of such entity's intent to apply, for regulatory approval. Note that DOE can select awardees for economic development grants prior to a decision to site and permit the relevant transmission project and obligate federal funds for such awardees, but DOE cannot authorize the disbursement of funds to an awardee until either a siting decision has been issued (if the grantee is a siting authority) or construction has commenced on the portion of the transmission project in the area under the jurisdiction of the grantee (for grantees that are not siting agencies). See section B of the FOA for more information.

18. Can funding only be awarded if the grant enhances the chance for approval of the proposed covered transmission project?

Applications for funding under Area of Interest 1, Section 50152(b)(1)(E) ("Other measures and actions that may improve the chances of, and shorten the time required for, approval by the siting authority of the application relating to the siting or permitting of the covered transmission project, as the Secretary determines appropriate."), must demonstrate how the proposed activity to be funded will improve the chances of approval by the siting authority of a covered transmission project. See FOA Section 1, part B.

19. Are international lines eligible for TSED (e.g., a line going from one US state into Canada)?

A covered transmission project must be either an interstate or offshore electricity transmission line that meets the relevant established kilovolt threshold and for which an entity has applied, or informed a siting authority of the entity's intent to apply, for regulatory approval. To qualify as interstate, the transmission line must traverse two or more states.

20. What is DOE's definition of "notified" jurisdictional authority of an application for siting approval of a covered transmission project?

An applicant must obtain written documentation evidencing that the entity has applied or informed a siting authority of the entity's intent to apply, for regulatory approval. This written documentation does not need to be in hand until the Full Application is submitted; it is not required at the Concept Paper stage.

21. Do offshore wind generation interties qualify as a "covered transmission project" if the voltage requirements are met?

Yes, if, in addition to meeting the voltage requirements, the entity has either applied, or informed a siting authority of such entity's intent to apply, for regulatory approval.



22. Are “interstate” lines defined to include FERC jurisdictional lines (i.e., transmission lines that fall within FERC’s jurisdiction and facilitate interstate wholesale sales, even if solely located within a state)?

No. Projects that are located within a single state and no other state are not “covered transmission projects” for the purposes of this program.

## Activities

23. What exactly is an Area of Interest (AOI)?

AOIs are distinct opportunities to apply for funding within this FOA. That is, this FOA has two interrelated AOIs but each one has distinct objectives, eligibility, and application criteria.

24. What types of activities are eligible for consideration under this FOA?

Information with respect to this question can be found in Section I.B. of the FOA.

25. Can I apply more than once or to more than one Area of Interest?

An eligible entity may submit more than one Concept Paper and Full Application in response to this FOA. DOE cannot accept a single application that proposes activities in more than one area of interest, but entities that are eligible for grants under both Area of Interest 1 (siting and permitting) and Area of Interest 2 (economic development) are welcome to submit separate applications for each area of interest. In addition, an applicant may propose more than one activity within a single area of interest within the same application (e.g., 2 siting and permitting activities or 3 economic development activities) or may choose to do so in separate applications.

26. If we include multiple activities under one area of interest in our concept paper and it is determined that only a portion of those activities meet the required criteria, would we still be invited to submit a full application?

In the event that an applicant proposes more than one activity under a single area of interest, in response to the applicant’s Concept Paper, DOE may provide input to the applicant encouraging the submission of a Full Application that includes only one or a sub-set of the proposed activities. Applicants may elect to submit a Full Application for all activities detailed in the Concept Paper or only those which DOE encouraged.

27. How will “communities that may be affected by the construction and operation of a covered transmission project” be defined for eligibility purposes, and how far from the centerline of the transmission project does such a community extend?

DOE has requests Applicants for Area of Interest 2 address how the project will promote economic development in areas that may be affected by the construction and operation of a covered transmission project. See Section IV.E.iii of the FOA.



28. Who is included/not included in "communities that may be affected by the construction and operation of a covered transmission project"?

Any community that "may be affected" by the construction and operation of a covered transmission project may be supported by TSED grants, including communities whose resources or economy will be impacted in some way. Please also refer to Section V regarding Application Review Information in the FOA for more detailed information about the criteria DOE will apply in evaluating applications.

## Project Administration

29. What projects must follow the Build America Buy America Act (BABA)?

The DOE financial assistance agreement will require each recipient: (1) to fulfill the commitments made in its application regarding the procurement of U.S.-produced products and (2) to fulfill the commitments made in its application regarding the procurement of other key component metals and manufactured products domestically that are deemed available in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality at the time of award negotiation. Applicants may seek waivers of these requirements in very limited circumstances and for good cause shown. Further details on requesting a waiver can be found in Appendix D and the terms and conditions of an award. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult Appendix D for more information.

30. What activities are Categorical Excluded (CX) from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review?

Applicants applying for support for siting and permitting activities under AOI 1 including support for studies, data analysis, computer and geospatial modeling, lab and bench-scale work in existing laboratories, coordination with local and state authorities are actions that generally do not present any extraordinary circumstances and would be covered by a CX outlined in Appendices A and B to the Subpart D of the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR 1021).

31. Does the TSED program trigger NEPA by DOE for individual grants?

DOE's decision on whether and how to distribute federal funds under this FOA is subject to NEPA (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action. That means that all recipients selected for an award will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the NEPA process in the manner most pertinent to their proposed project.





## Cost Match

### Forms

32. The FOA states that “reporting requirements are identified on the Federal Assistance Reporting Checklist and Instructions, attached to the award agreement”. Can you provide a copy of the FARC showing said requirements?

Yes, an example of the Federal Assistance Reporting Checklist (FARC) can be accessed at: [DOE F4600.2, FA Reporting Checklist](#) (energy.gov).

### Miscellaneous

33. The Transmission Siting and Economic Development Program (TSED) is \$760 million, but this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) (DE-FOA-0003101) has a maximum award of \$300 million between both Areas of Interest. What is the plan for the rest of the funding?

The Department of Energy Grid Deployment Office plans to issue additional funding opportunity announcements pertaining to the TSED Program in the future.

### Definitions