

Notice of Intent (NOI) no. DE-FOA-0003388
Issue Date: July 18, 2024

DISCLAIMER: The “Notice of Intent to Issue” is for informational purposes only; the Department of Energy is not seeking comments on the information in this notice.

This is a Notice of Intent to Issue
Funding Opportunity Announcement No. DE-FOA-0003348
Puerto Rico Energy Resilience Fund: Resilient Communities Program

U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) intends to issue, on behalf of the DOE Grid Deployment Office (GDO), a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) in the third quarter of calendar year 2024. If issued, DOE will be seeking applications for awards under the Puerto Rico Energy Resilience Fund (PR-ERF) for activities to improve the resilience of the Puerto Rican electric grid, including renewable energy and storage solutions for vulnerable households and communities. Per the authorizing FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act, these activities will include resilience improvements that benefit low- and moderate-income individuals and individuals with disabilities.

TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES

In December 2022, President Biden signed the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act into law, which included \$1 billion to drive key investments in renewable and resilient energy infrastructure in Puerto Rico. On February 21, 2023, DOE’s GDO established the Puerto Rico Energy Resilience Fund (PR-ERF) to administer the \$1 billion through programs focused on both residential and community-based energy resilience investments, including but not limited to, solar photovoltaic (PV) and battery storage deployments, as well as community partnerships and other activities to grow Puerto Rico’s clean energy economy.

To date, DOE has awarded 10 cooperative agreements totaling up to \$450 million to solar companies, non-profits, and community-based organizations to support the installation of residential solar systems to very low-income Puerto Rican households either located in areas that experience frequent and prolonged power outages or that include a resident with an energy-dependent disability.

This FOA would seek to improve resilience at a community level for underserved and vulnerable populations. Specifically, this FOA would target installations on community healthcare facilities and on common areas within public or privately owned subsidized multi-family housing projects to ensure individuals have continuous access to critical services during power outages.

It is anticipated that the FOA may include the following Topic Areas:

Topic Area 1: Solar and Storage Installations for Common Areas within Public or Privately Owned Subsidized Multi-Family Properties

This Topic Area would solicit applications to deploy battery storage and solar PV installations, using commercially available technology, to improve the resilience of public or privately owned subsidized multi-family properties in Puerto Rico, specifically those assisted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Solar and storage systems may be used to power community centers or common areas located within the footprint of public or privately owned, HUD-assisted multi-family properties to ensure residents have continuous access to electricity during power outages.

GDO anticipates awarding cooperative agreements, or if determined necessary by DOE to better achieve program mission, consideration will also be given to issuing awards using its Other Transactions Authority (OTA). Applications selected for award will proceed across two phases—a design phase followed by the construction phase—with a go/no-go decision between phases.

GDO anticipates awarding a total of between \$93M and \$185M, with 1-2 individual awards.

DOE anticipates seeking applications from entities or teams of entities that have the potential to coordinate installation at multiple sites (e.g., 150 sites). The following entities would be eligible to apply individually or as collaboratives:

- Public Housing Authorities that manage public housing projects
- Non-profits and for-profit entities that own or operate HUD-assisted housing projects
- Other non-profit and for-profit entities can qualify as the prime applicant if they demonstrate partnerships and/or the potential to form partnerships with firm letters of commitments, and show substantial involvement from subrecipients that own, operate, manage, or administer eligible public and/or subsidized housing.

Topic Area 2: Solar and Storage Installations for Community Healthcare Facilities

This Topic Area would solicit applications to deploy battery storage and solar PV installations, using commercially available technology, to enhance the resilience of community healthcare facilities—specifically Federally Qualified Health Centers, Dialysis Centers, Diagnostic and Treatment Centers—located in low-and-moderate income communities.

GDO anticipates awarding cooperative agreements, or if determined necessary by DOE to better achieve program mission, consideration will also be given to issuing awards using its OTA. Applications selected for award will proceed across two phases—a design phase followed by the construction phase—with a go/no-go decision between phases.

GDO anticipates awarding a total of between \$70M and \$140M with 1-2 individual awards.

DOE anticipates seeking applications from entities or teams of entities that have the potential to coordinate installation at multiple sites (e.g., 100 sites). The following entities would be eligible to apply individually or as collaboratives:

- Entities that own, operate, or administer Federally Qualified Health Centers, Dialysis Centers, and/or Diagnostic and Treatment Centers
- Other non-profit and for-profit entities can qualify as the prime applicant if they demonstrate partnerships and/or the potential to form partnerships with firm letters of commitments, and show substantial involvement from subrecipients that own, operate, manage, or administer eligible community healthcare facilities.

AWARD INFORMATION

Go/No-Go Review

Awards selected under this planned FOA will consist of a phased approach with two phases to manage scope, schedule, deliverables, and budget, with a formal Go/No-Go decision point between the Design (Phase 1) and Construction (Phase 2) of the system(s). Funding for the Construction phase will be contingent upon the successful completion of the Design phase. At the Go/No-Go decision point, DOE will evaluate project performance, project schedule adherence, the extent milestone objectives are met, compliance with reporting requirements, and overall contribution to the program goals and objectives. Specific Go/No-Go criteria will be defined further in the FOA and will be negotiated with each selected project. In addition to the Go/No-Go decision point, projects may be discontinued if award requirements are not met, throughout the life of the award, in accordance with applicable Federal financial assistance regulations.

Teaming Arrangement

Teams should include members that have an existing, physical presence in Puerto Rico and are in financial and regulatory good standing. All teams will be required to have appropriate teaming partnerships needed to successfully complete the objectives of the planned FOA. Multi-stakeholder teams will be best positioned to ensure efforts and objectives supported by the FOA have the necessary support from relevant partners, community members and stakeholders to be successful both during and after the project period. Partnerships in the form of multi-stakeholder teams should include:

- Lead organization to represent the team;
- Representative that has official decision-making authority for the target facility or facilities, if different from the lead organization;
- Expert local consultant with a demonstrated track record in the development, design, and/or engineering of solar and storage systems in Puerto Rico or, preferably, in the target community;

- All other entities and organizations that together have sufficient authority and influence to ensure overall success in applying the Federal funding within the community toward achieving the FOA's objectives of energy resilience.

Teaming partnerships should include Puerto Rican-based entities, which may include but not limited to, the following types of organizations: non-profit organizations, community-based organizations and grassroots organizations, solar installations companies, design and engineering firms, an energy service company (ESCO), consultants, corporations or similar organizations contributing to the economic development of the community, in particular: the community's small- to mid-size businesses that are majority owned or controlled by underrepresented persons or groups of underrepresented persons.

Specifications

Applicants may propose a wide range of business models to deploy, operate and maintain solar PV and battery storage systems including direct ownership, third-party ownership, and more, if within the confines of the applicable Federal financial assistance regulations. Applicants should demonstrate how the project provides direct beneficiary support, building inspection and design, certain activities to make a building "solar-ready", installation and inspection, facilities management, operation and/or oversight education and training, submittal of interconnection application, a cost-effective plan for operations and maintenance and insurance, and other relevant activities. Applicants should factor in the application of Build America, Buy America requirements that will apply to the FOA. DOE is not soliciting the development of microgrids as part of the planned FOA.

SUBMISSION AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FULL APPLICATION

If the FOA is released, it will be posted on Clean Energy Infrastructure Funding Opportunity Exchange (INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE) at <https://infrastructure-eXCHANGE.energy.gov>. Entities interested in applying for awards under the FOA are strongly encouraged to register at these sites to receive notification of announcements regarding the FOA. If DOE decides to issue the FOA, applications can only be submitted through the Clean Energy Infrastructure Funding Opportunity Exchange (INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE) at <https://infrastructure-eXCHANGE.energy.gov>, online application portal.

There are several one-time actions that must be completed before submitting an application in response to the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) (e.g., register with the System for Award Management (SAM), obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, and register with the Clean Energy Infrastructure Funding Opportunity Exchange (INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE). It is vital that Applicants address these items as soon as possible. Some may take several weeks, and failure to complete them could interfere with an Applicant's ability to apply to this FOA.

- **SAM** - Applicants must register with the SAM at <http://www.sam.gov/> prior to submitting an application. Designating an Electronic Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) and obtaining a special password called an MPIN are important steps in SAM

registration. The applicant must maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration. More information about SAM registration for applicants is available at:

https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp?id=gsafsd_kb_articles&sys_id=650d493e1bab7c105465eaccac4bcbcb.

NOTE: If clicking the SAM links do not work, please copy and paste the link into your browser.

- **UEI** - Applicants must obtain an UEI from the SAM to uniquely identify the entity. The UEI is available in the SAM entity registration record.
NOTE: 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.
Due to the high demand of UEI requests and SAM registrations, entity legal business name and address validations are taking longer than expected to process. Entities should start the UEI and SAM registration process as soon as possible. If entities have technical difficulties with the UEI validation or SAM registration process they should utilize the HELP feature on SAM.gov. SAM.gov will address entity service tickets in the order in which they are received and asks that entities not create multiple service tickets for the same request or technical issue. Additional entity validation resources can be found here: [GSAFSD Tier 0 Knowledge Base - Quick Access Links: Validating your Entity](#).

- **INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY EXCHANGE (INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE)**
– Register and create an account on INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE at <https://infrastructure-eXCHANGE.energy.gov>. This account will allow the user to apply to any open FOAs that are currently in INFRASTRUCTURE 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. Applicants should also designate backup points of contact so they may be easily contacted if deemed necessary. This step is required to apply to a FOA. The INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE registration does not have a delay; however, the remaining registration requirements below could take several weeks to process and are necessary for a potential Applicant to receive an award under this FOA.

Questions related to the registration process and use of the INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE website should be submitted to: INFRASTRUCTURE-eXCHANGESupport@hq.doe.gov.

- **Grants.gov** – 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.

- **Electronic Authorization of Applications and Award Documents** – Submission of an application and supplemental information under this FOA through electronic systems used by the DOE, including INFRASTRUCTURE eXCHANGE, constitutes the authorized representative’s approval and electronic signature.

DISCLAIMER

This NOI is issued so that interested parties are aware that DOE may issue a FOA on this topic. Any information contained in this NOI is subject to change.

No Full Applications are being accepted at this time.

DOE may issue a FOA as described in the NOI; may issue a FOA that is significantly different than the FOA described in the NOI; or may not issue a FOA at all.

DOE will **not** entertain questions at this time regarding issuance of the FOA. Details on how to submit questions and comments would be provided in the FOA.