



American-Made Challenges

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Energizing Rural Communities Prize

Supporting innovative partnership and finance plans to help rural or remote communities develop clean energy demonstration projects.

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Stage:
Winner Announcement

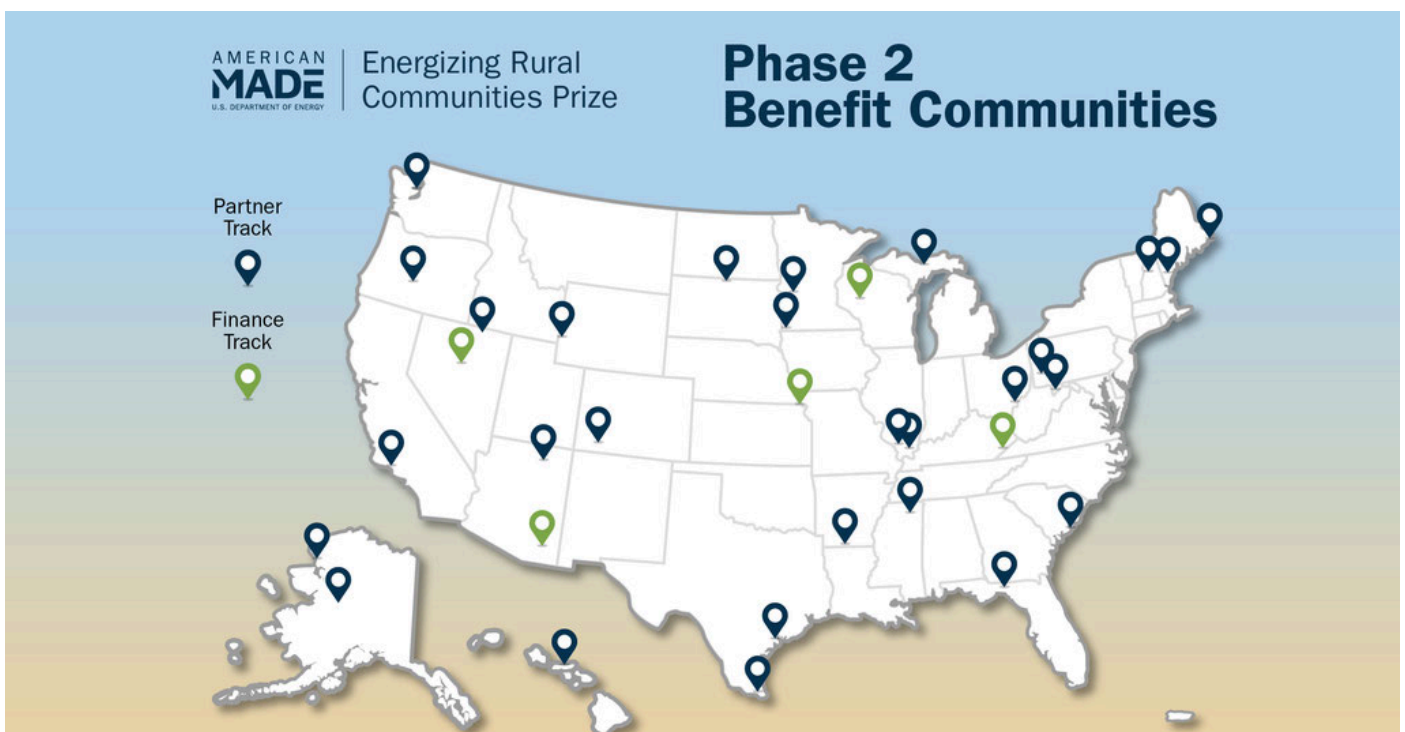
Challenge Updates

Congratulations to the 33 Phase Two Winning Teams!

Sept. 18, 2024, 12:11 p.m. PDT by NREL Prize Administrator

The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) announced 33 winners from the second phase of the \$15 million Energizing Rural Communities Prize.

Each winning team will receive \$200,000 for their efforts to continue developing partnership and financing strategies that support energy system improvements in rural or remote communities.



Read the full DOE announcement and see the winning teams here:

<https://www.energy.gov/oced/articles/award-wednesdays-september-18-2024>

The full list of winning teams can also be seen in the Teams tab.

This announcement concludes the Energizing Rural Communities Prize. Thank you to everyone who competed and followed along, helping make meaningful impacts in rural and remote communities!

Congratulations to the Energizing Rural Communities Prize Phase One Winners!

July 14, 2023, 12:20 p.m. PDT by Jenny Wiegele

Thank you to all of the teams and individuals that submitted one of the many entries into the Energizing Rural Communities Prize! We had an overwhelming response from communities interested in supporting their local clean energy transition, and we are excited to work with many of you going forward.

Please congratulate the 67 winning teams, listed on [HeroX](#) and on [American-Made Challenges](#).

We enjoyed reading your proposals and learning about your vision for your communities. It has been an honor for all of us to get to know you through the information you shared. If you were selected as a winner, you will soon receive an email from the ruralenergyprize@nrel.gov email address with some next steps to receive your payment and to engage with the team going forward.

For those of you who were not selected, you will still receive reviewer feedback with guidance on how to improve submissions going forward. In either case, we encourage you to continue applying for funding opportunities to make your vision a reality.

Thank you again, and we look forward to working with many of you!

– Energizing Rural Communities Prize Administration Team

 8 comments

Resources While You Wait

Judging is underway! While our reviewers review your submissions, we wanted to highlight some other funding opportunities open now:

DE-FOA-0002940: [BIL: INDUSTRIAL ASSESSMENT CENTER \(IAC\) PROGRAM – IACS AT TRADE SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND UNION TRAINING PROGRAMS; AND BUILDING TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS \(BTAC\) PROGRAM](#)

The Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains (MESC) and Office of State and Community Energy Programs (SCEP) is issuing this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) to establish new Industrial Assessment Centers (IACs) at community colleges, trade schools, and union training programs, as well as to create new Building Training and Assessment Centers (BTACs) at institutions of higher education, including Tribal colleges and universities. The new IACs and BTACs that will be created with this funding will build upon the demonstrated success of applied learning environments and hands-on training approaches of existing IACs. The IACs also will draw on the unique strengths, geographic reach, and faculty/student composition of trade schools, community colleges, union training programs, and other institutions of higher education. The new IACs will focus on high-quality skilled trades job pathways in fields such as industrial electrician, energy management, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing, while providing hands-on support to small and medium manufactures. The new BTACs will expand these benefits to commercial and institutional buildings to help lower utility costs and allow companies to reinvest in businesses, employees, and community services. BTACs will train students and workers as engineers, architects, building scientists, building energy permitting and enforcement officials, and building technicians in energy-efficient design and operation.

DOE intends that the investments made under this FOA will support the broader government-wide approach to strengthening domestic manufacturing and economic resilience; putting the United States on a path to achieve net-zero emissions economy-wide; empowering workers; fostering safe, healthy, and inclusive workplaces and communities, and developing a diverse workforce well-qualified to build and maintain the country's energy infrastructure.

Concept Paper Submission Deadline: 6/16/2023 5:00 PM ET

Full Application Submission Deadline: 8/15/2023 5:00 PM ET

DE-FOA-0003066: [2023 FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ENERGY IMPROVEMENTS AT NONPROFITS – BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW \(BIL\) – RENEW AMERICA'S NONPROFITS](#)

The Office of State and Community Energy Programs is issuing this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), Renew America's Nonprofits. Awards made under this FOA will be funded, in whole or in part, with funds appropriated by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, more commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

This FOA seeks applications that address energy efficiency upgrades, which enable scalable impacts, create innovative partnerships, and leverage funding and economies of scale.

As part of and in addition to upgrading and modernizing infrastructure, DOE's BIL investments will support efforts to build a clean and equitable energy economy that achieves a zero-carbon electricity system by 2035, and to put the United States on a path to achieve net-zero emissions economy-wide by no later than 2050 to benefit all Americans.

The activities to be funded under this FOA support BIL Section 40542 and the broader government-wide approach to invest in projects that enable innovative and sustaining partnership models, leverage funding and economies of scale, and focus on disadvantaged communities and energy communities.

DOE is using an aggregation model to enhance the technical and administrative capacity of nonprofits seeking access to this funding. Under this model, DOE will award 5-15 larger grants to nonprofits interested in serving as Prime recipients. These Prime recipients will assemble and support a group of energy efficiency projects in the facilities of other nonprofit organizations. Ultimately, hundreds of nonprofit facilities should be represented across these project bundles.

Sign-up as prime or join the teaming list.

Letter of Intent Deadline: 6/29/2023 5:00 PM ET

[MAKE IT Prize Strategies Track](#)

The Manufacture of Advanced Key Energy Infrastructure Technologies (MAKE IT) Prize aims to catalyze domestic manufacturing of critical clean energy technology components, moving manufacturing facilities from planning to shovel-ready and enabling strategies for vibrant manufacturing activities in communities.

The Strategies Track aims to help build interest and engagement around manufacturing clean energy technologies and expand the potential for more clean energy jobs and economic opportunity. In this track, competitors will develop a roadmap to promote clean energy manufacturing activity in their region and provide a statement of interest from an entity interested in establishing a facility in their region.

Pre-register now. Anticipated to open: July 11, 2023, 9 a.m. MDT

[DE-FOA-0003045: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Energy Improvement In Rural Or Remote Areas \(Era\) Fixed Award Grant Program](#)

This FOA provides \$50 million in Federal funding and is designed to support small community-driven clean energy projects requiring \$500,000 to \$5 million in Federal funding. Other ERA funding opportunities include DE-FOA-0002970, titled "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law: Energy Improvement in Rural or Remote Areas," which provides \$5 million to \$100 million in Federal funding to community- and large-scale demonstration projects that address region-specific energy challenges, and a \$15 million Energizing Rural Communities Prize, which provides up to \$300,000 cash prizes to assist development of partnerships and financing models to advance clean energy projects. This FOA utilizes a simplified application process and will award fixed-amount grants. This grant mechanism significantly reduces financial reporting requirements associated with larger DOE awards. Recipients are responsible for accomplishing their proposed work.

Submission Deadlines:

Pre-Application Submission Deadline: 7/13/2023 5:00 PM ET

Full Application Submission Deadline: 10/12/2023 5:00 PM ET

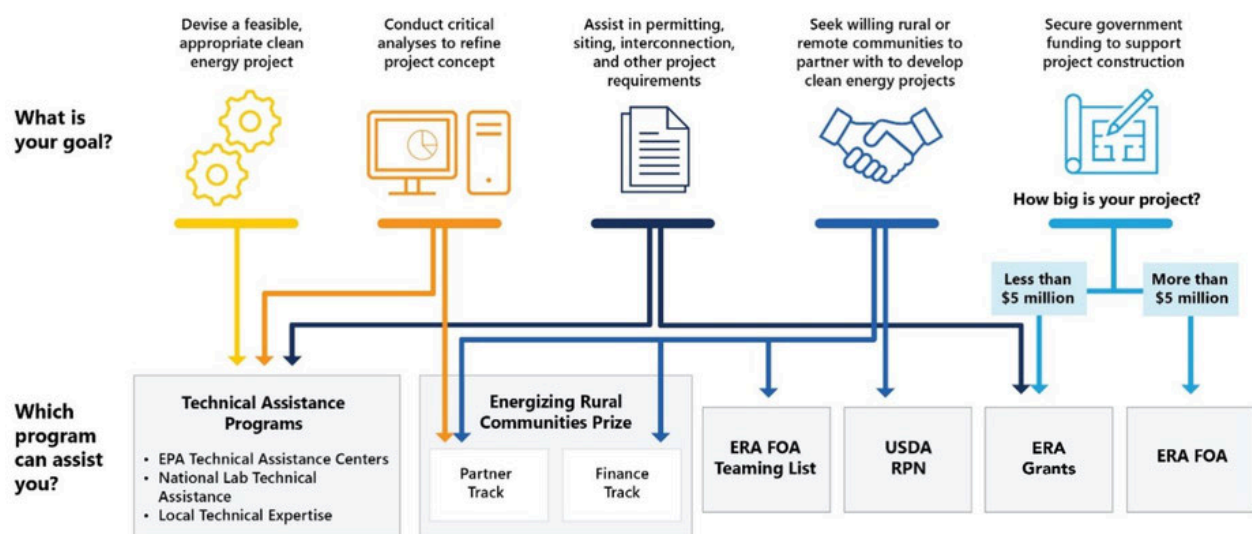


Figure 2: Pre-Award Technical Assistance, Prize competition and related programming

[Buildings Upgrade Prize](#)

Upgrading existing buildings to efficiently run on clean energy will help address climate change. Building upgrades may include transitioning to efficient electric equipment, including heat pumps and heat pump water heaters, and improving building efficiency through measures such as insulation and air sealing. Together, efforts will help reduce carbon emissions and energy costs, while improving indoor air quality and occupant comfort.

Developed by the U.S. Department of Energy Building Technologies Office (BTO), Buildings UP aims to build capacity to rapidly and equitably transform U.S. buildings.

Teams will submit innovative concepts to leverage the billions of dollars available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), utility rebate programs, and many other funding sources, capitalizing on this once-in-a-generation opportunity to equitably transform a wide variety of buildings across diverse geographies. As teams progress through the prize, they will receive cash prizes and technical assistance to help bring their ideas to life.

[Buildings Upgrade Prize](#) Phase 1: Concept Deadline: July 18, 2023

[Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant \(EECBG\) Program](#)

The EECBG Program assists eligible states, units of local government, and Indian tribes, as described below (herein called “entities” or “eligible entities”) in implementing strategies to:

Reduce fossil fuel emissions in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and, to the maximum extent practicable, maximizes benefits for local and regional communities;

Reduce the total energy use of the eligible entities; and

Improve energy efficiency in the transportation sector, the building sector, and other appropriate sectors.

Build a clean and equitable energy economy that prioritizes disadvantaged communities and promotes equity and inclusion in workforce opportunities and deployment activities, consistent with the Justice40 Initiative.

Deadline for states to apply is: July 31, 2023

Deadline for Tribes or local government to apply is: January 2024

Submissions Due Today!

May 24, 2023, 8:50 a.m. PDT by NREL Prize Moderator (Amanda)

The submission deadline is 5pm ET today!

There is last minute help from Power Connectors available today:

1:30–3:30 pm ET with Clean Energy Business Network: <https://www.cebn.org/wp-content/uploads/ERC-Office-Hours-5.24.23.ics>

4:00–5:00 pm ET with Entrepreneur Futures Network: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/energizing-rural-communities-prize-office-hours->

Power Connectors can provide feedback on your submission.

Good Luck!

💬 3 comments

One Week to Go!

May 17, 2023, 12:51 p.m. PDT by Jenny Wiegele

There is just one week left to pull together your application for the Energizing Rural Communities Prize!

We encourage you to leverage office hours from the Power Connectors, the teaming platform to find any other partners to add to your application, and reach out to us on the forum with any last-minute questions.

We know there's been some confusion around the definition of the phases, so for clarity, we are including language from the FAQ below to define the current phase vs. what you're submitting in your Phase One application:

We are currently in Phase One, which ends on May 24th, 2023.

- Phase Two begins once Phase One awards are announced. Exact dates TBA.
- Phase Two then runs for one year and ends with a final submission. Exact dates TBA.
- The prize concludes and Phase Two awards are announced. Exact dates TBA.

In Phase One you are proposing a plan. In Phase Two you are acting on that plan. At the end of Phase Two, teams that win \$200k would then leverage their winnings to complete their clean energy demonstrations/implement their construction/finance projects.

Again, in your Phase One plans, your team should be addressing what activities you would pursue if you were to win the \$100k Phase One award, however, some criterion also ask your team to think about what you would then pursue with the \$200k Phase Two award (as it relates to future planning/goals).

We encourage you to review the scoring criteria closely.

And finally, a primary goal of this prize is to build capacity for communities to access future sources of funding to make these projects sustainable. Here are a few

opportunities, open now, that you may also want to consider as complementary to this prize:

- [DOE Energy in Rural and Remote Areas](#)
- [USDA Rural Utilities Service, Rural Energy for America & other USDA programs](#)
- [DOE Buildings Upgrade Prize](#)

Good Luck!

 2 comments

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