

# Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (ERA) Program

## IGAP Request for Information Snapshot

October 13, 2022

<b>Department:</b> US Department of Energy (DOE)	<b>Agency:</b> Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED)
<b>Application Deadline:</b> November 28, 2022	<b>Docket Number:</b> DE-FOA-0002841_RFI

### Summary

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$1 billion to OCED for the five-year period 2022-2026 to improve in rural or remote areas of the United States the resilience, safety, reliability, and availability of energy and environmental protection from adverse impacts of energy generation. OCED intends to implement these activities as the Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas (ERA) Program. The purpose of this RFI is to solicit feedback on topics such as rural and remote clean energy needs and opportunities, optimal clean energy outcomes, barriers, stakeholder engagement, community benefits, and financing mechanisms that will inform the structure, strategy, and execution of the ERA Program.

### Background

The overall goal of the ERA Program is to demonstrate innovative and replicable approaches to improve the resilience, safety, reliability, and availability of, and reduce the adverse impacts from, energy generation by rural or remote areas.

The ERA Program may provide support using a number of mechanisms and tools to rural or remote areas for the purpose of:

- Improving the overall cost-effectiveness of energy generation, transmission, or distribution systems
- Siting or upgrading transmission and distribution lines
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation by rural or remote areas
- Providing or modernizing electric generation facilities
- Developing microgrids
- Increasing energy efficiency

Responses to this RFI will be used by DOE for planning purposes to develop the ERA Program, which may include the use of Technical Assistance, Prizes, Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA), Other Transactional Authorities (OTAs), or Partnership Intermediary Agreements (PIAs).

- Who Should Respond** DOE is seeking feedback from respondents that include, but are not limited to:
- Clean energy industry and its investors
  - Residents of rural or remote areas
  - Commercial and industrial energy users in rural or remote areas
  - Federal and state regulatory agencies
  - Tribal governments
  - State and local governments
  - Labor unions and workforce training organizations
  - Environmental justice and energy justice organizations
  - American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages and other tribal organizations
  - Community-based organizations
  - Economic development organizations
  - Conservation and environmental groups
  - Academic and other research institutions
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**Response Guidelines** Respondents are invited to respond to as many or as few of the questions as they wish and should prioritize areas most relevant to their own interests and expertise. For ease of replying and to aid categorization of your responses, please copy and paste the RFI questions, including the question numbering, and use them as a template for your response. Respondents are requested to provide the following information at the start of their response to this RFI:

- Respondent name (could be individual or organization's name)
- Name of point of contact for response (if response is on behalf of an organization)
- Point of contact's address, phone number, and e-mail address

Responses must be provided as attachments to an email. It is recommended that attachments with file sizes exceeding 25MB be compressed (i.e., zipped) to ensure message delivery. Responses must be provided as a Microsoft Word (.docx) attachment to the email, and no more than 50 pages in length, 12-point font, 1-inch margins.

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**Key Questions** The questions in this RFI are grouped into four categories. This is not a complete list of the questions included in the RFI. To view the full list of questions, please review the [RFI](#).

### **Category 1: Respondent Characteristics**

- What type of organization do you represent, or are you responding as a private citizen? To help DOE categorize responses, please use one of the following respondent classifications: private citizen, government, community-based organization, labor union, energy provider, American Indian Tribe and Alaska Native Village, or other tribal organization, for-profit company, other type of non-profit entity, or other. If other, please specify.
- What role would you or your organization play in an energy project conducted through this program?

### **Category 2: Potential Project Details**

Questions in Category 2 relate to understanding the types of projects that would fit within the purposes outlined in BIL:

- Improving the overall cost-effectiveness of energy generation, transmission, or distribution systems
- Siting or upgrading transmission and distribution lines
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation by rural or remote areas

- Providing or modernizing electric generation facilities
- Developing microgrids
- Increasing energy efficiency

Questions in Category 2 address the following project considerations:

- Area Definition
- Project Priorities
- Project Size
- Project Staffing and Long-term Sustainability
- Community Benefits Planning
- Outcomes and Replicability

### **Category 3: Program Structure**

Questions in Category 3 are aimed to collect feedback and additional information on the structure of the Program, including the role of partners, states, and other organizations in supporting improvements in rural and remote areas.

Questions in Category 3 address the following program considerations:

- Program Design
  - Stakeholder Engagement
  - Community Readiness
  - Partnerships
  - Financing
- Competitive Solicitations
  - Prize Competitions
  - Grants and Cooperative Agreements
  - Other Transaction Agreements (OTA) and Partnership Intermediary Agreements (PIA)
- Technical Assistance
- Evaluation, Analysis and Partnerships to Ensure Enduring Impacts

### **Category 4: Open**

- Please provide any additional information or input not specifically requested in the questions above that you believe would be valuable to help DOE develop the ERA Program

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## **How to Submit**

Responses to this RFI must be submitted electronically to [ERA@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ERA@hq.doe.gov) no later than 12:00pm (ET) on 11/28/2022. Only electronic written responses will be accepted.

In lieu of or in addition to providing written responses to this RFI, respondents may request a 30-minute individual unrecorded discussion with a DOE staff member regarding the content of their written responses to the RFI questions. If a respondent wishes to participate in an individual discussion, please submit your request to [ERA@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ERA@hq.doe.gov) by Friday, November 18, 2022 and you will be contacted by an ERA Program staff member to schedule a time for the discussion by 5:00 pm (ET) on Friday, November 18, 2022.

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## **Resources**

- [Request for Information on the OCED Exchange](#)
- [Request for Information Announcement](#)